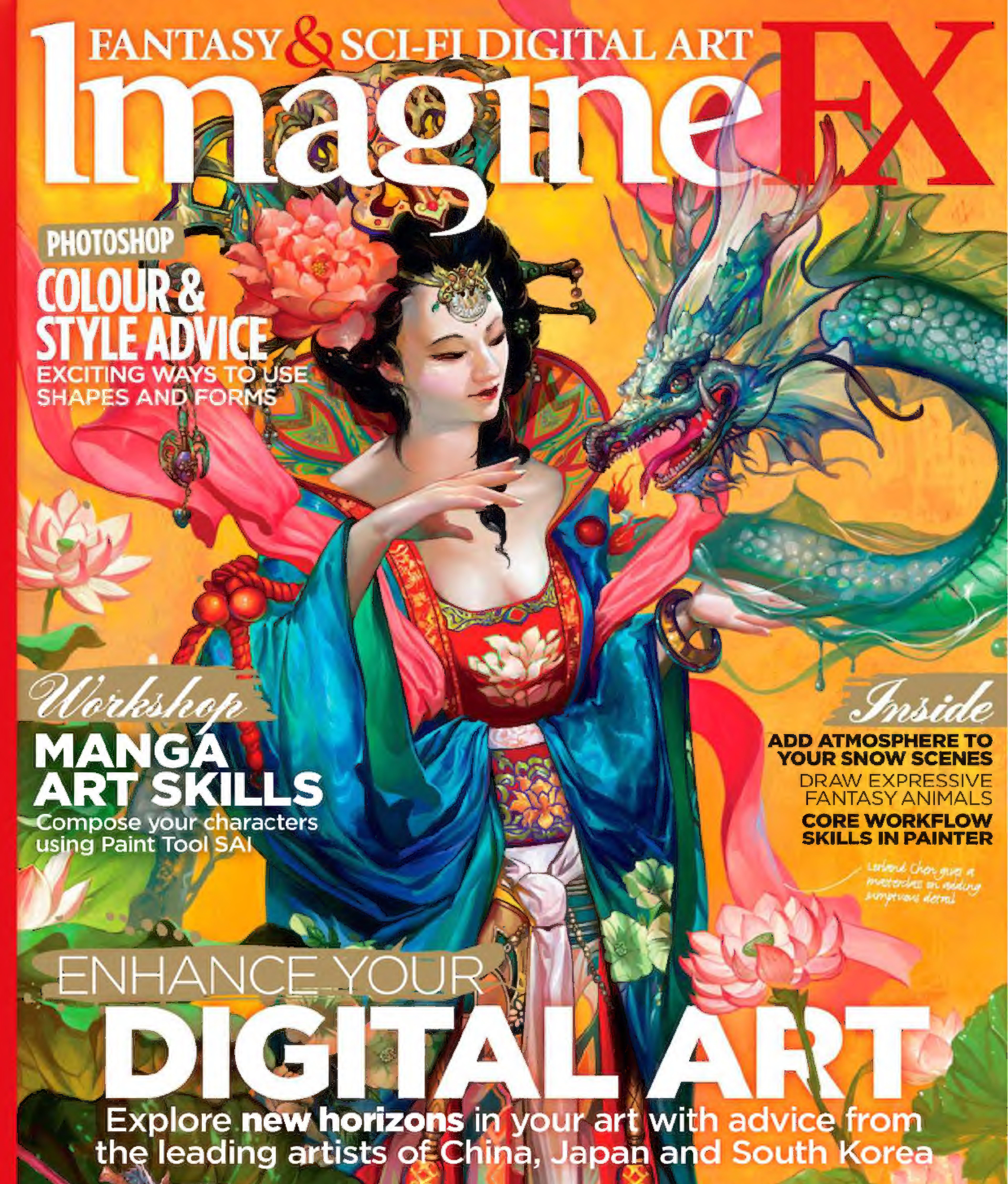
FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX



PHOTOSHOP

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Inside

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DRAW EXPRESSIVE FANTASY ANIMALS

CORE WORKFLOW SKILLS IN PAINTER

Lorland Chen gives a masterclass in adding sumptuous detail

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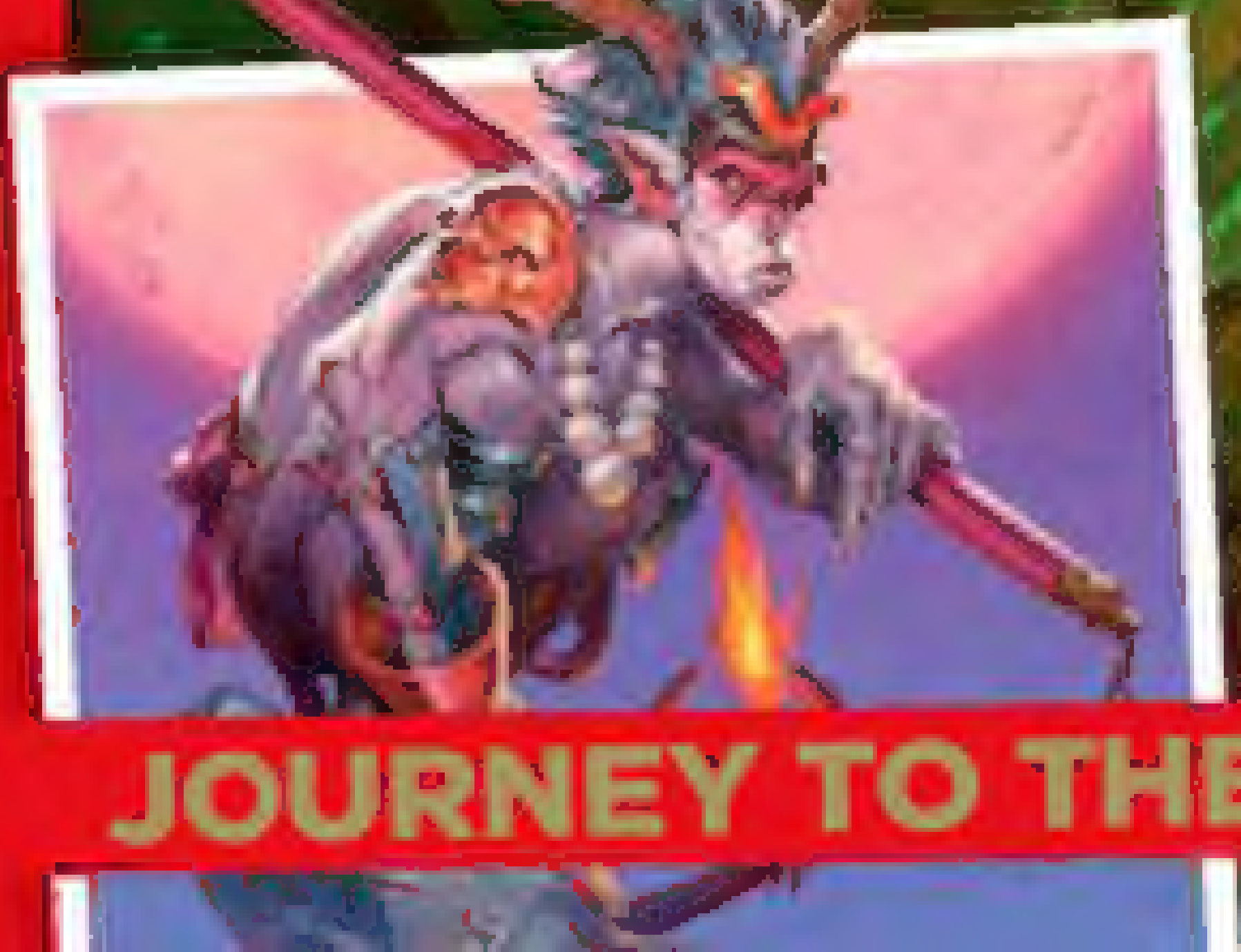
Issue 77 | Christmas 2011 | Printed in the UK £5.99



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Welcome... to a labour of love

"Suki koso mono no jozu nare." This Japanese saying was brought to my attention by Hiro Usuda, who mentions the phrase in her manga workshop on page 80. It means, "What one likes, one will do best". Essentially, if you love what you do, then you'll strive to make it work. I love this sentiment and it really resonates with me in relation to the magazine you're holding in your hands.

First, for the team and I, putting these pages together is a real labour of love. We're constantly trying to deliver an issue that'll help you improve, get you inspired and make you begin a painting project. If there's just one workshop or piece of art that moves you enough to pick up a pencil or stylus, then we're doing our job.

Second, by reading ImagineFX and constantly surrounding yourself with artists who push themselves to become better every day you will, in turn, work harder to improve your own art.

If you read ImagineFX, but find that the trials of life or a lack of confidence are holding you back from doing what you love, remember this (rather less-elegant) proverb: you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs. Pick up your art tool of choice and start drawing or painting today. The more mistakes you make, the better you'll become and the more you'll like what you create. Good luck.

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

Our special cover for subscribers this issue.

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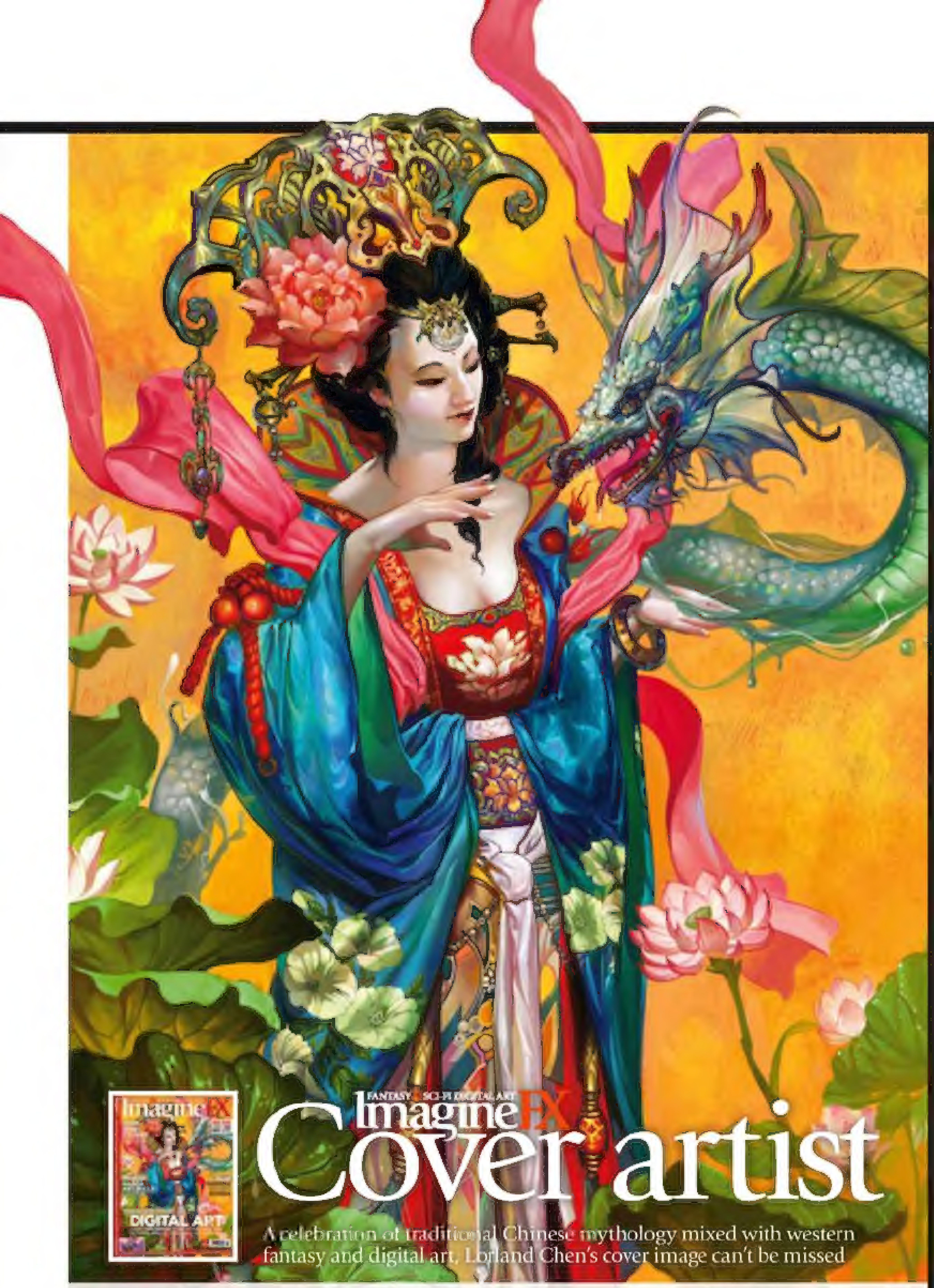


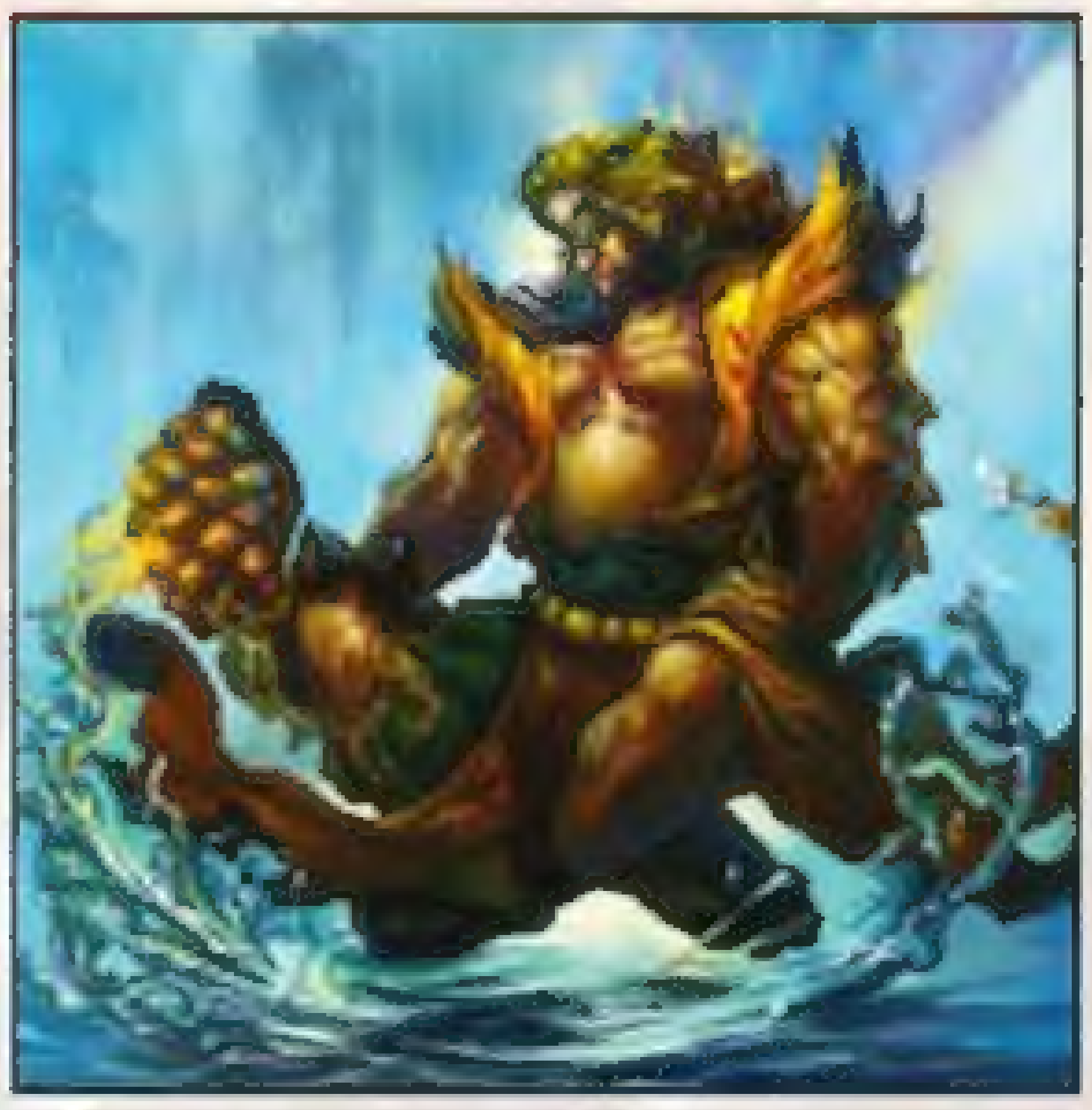
Cover artist

A celebration of traditional Chinese mythology mixed with western fantasy and digital art, Lorland Chen's cover image can't be missed

Lorland Chen

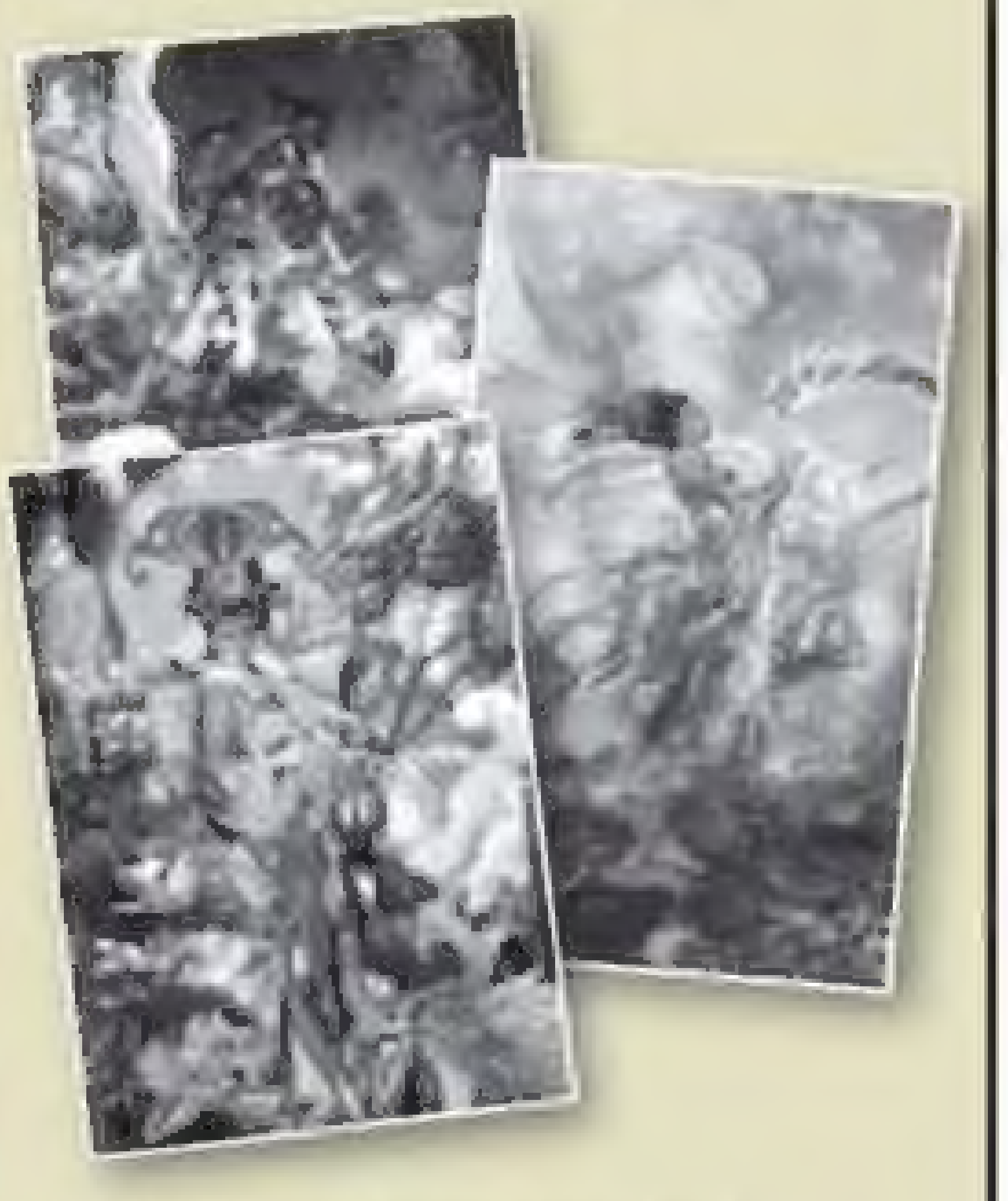
COUNTRY: China
SOFTWARE: Photoshop
WEB: http://bit.ly/lorland

It's not uncommon for digital artists to have pseudonyms and our cover artist has four: Lorland Chen, Lorland Chain, Wei Chain and Chen Wei. But then he's very busy, dividing his time between video games studios, personal projects and teaching at the Chengdu Academy of Fine Arts. Oh, and painting this issue's vibrant cover!

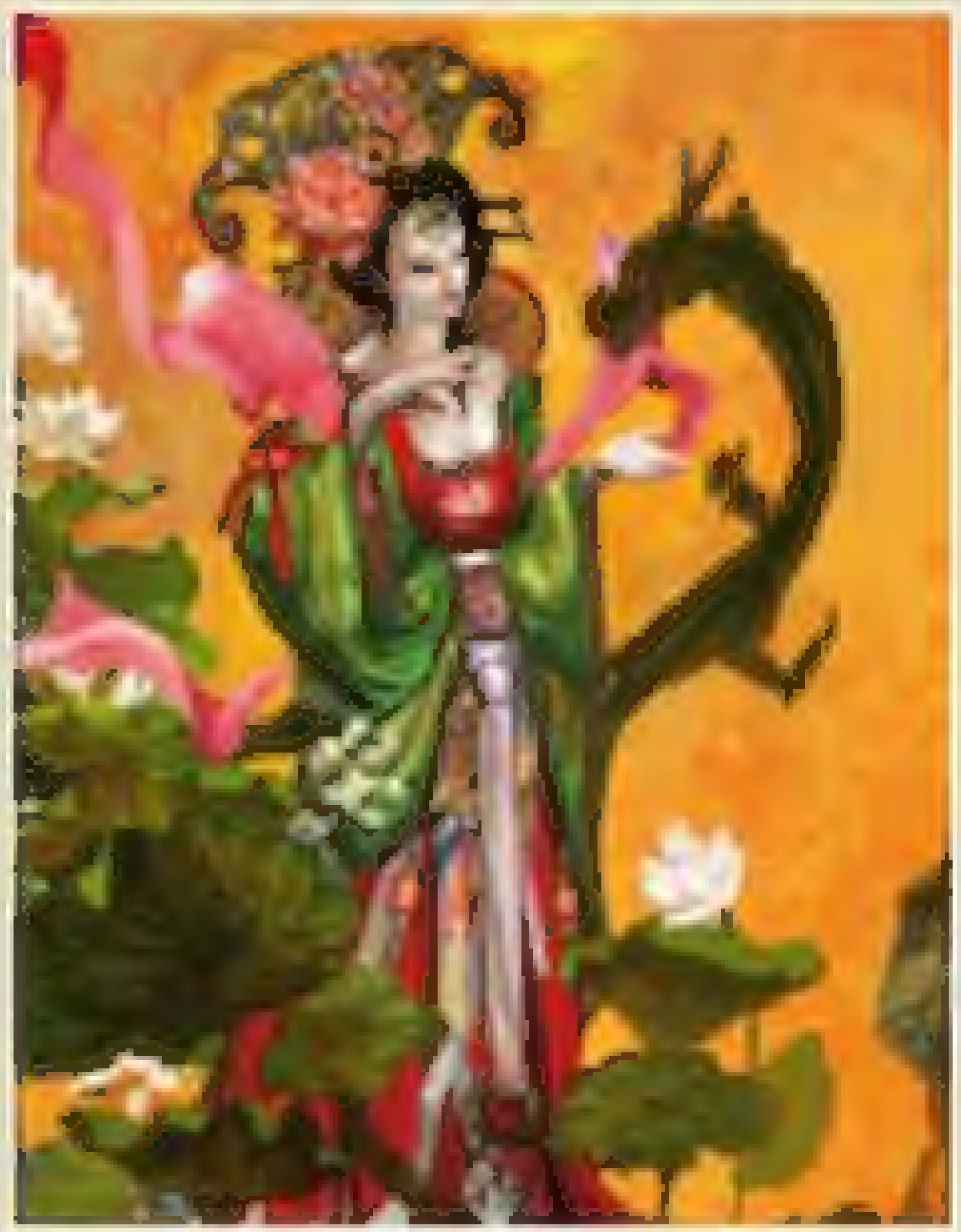


In progress

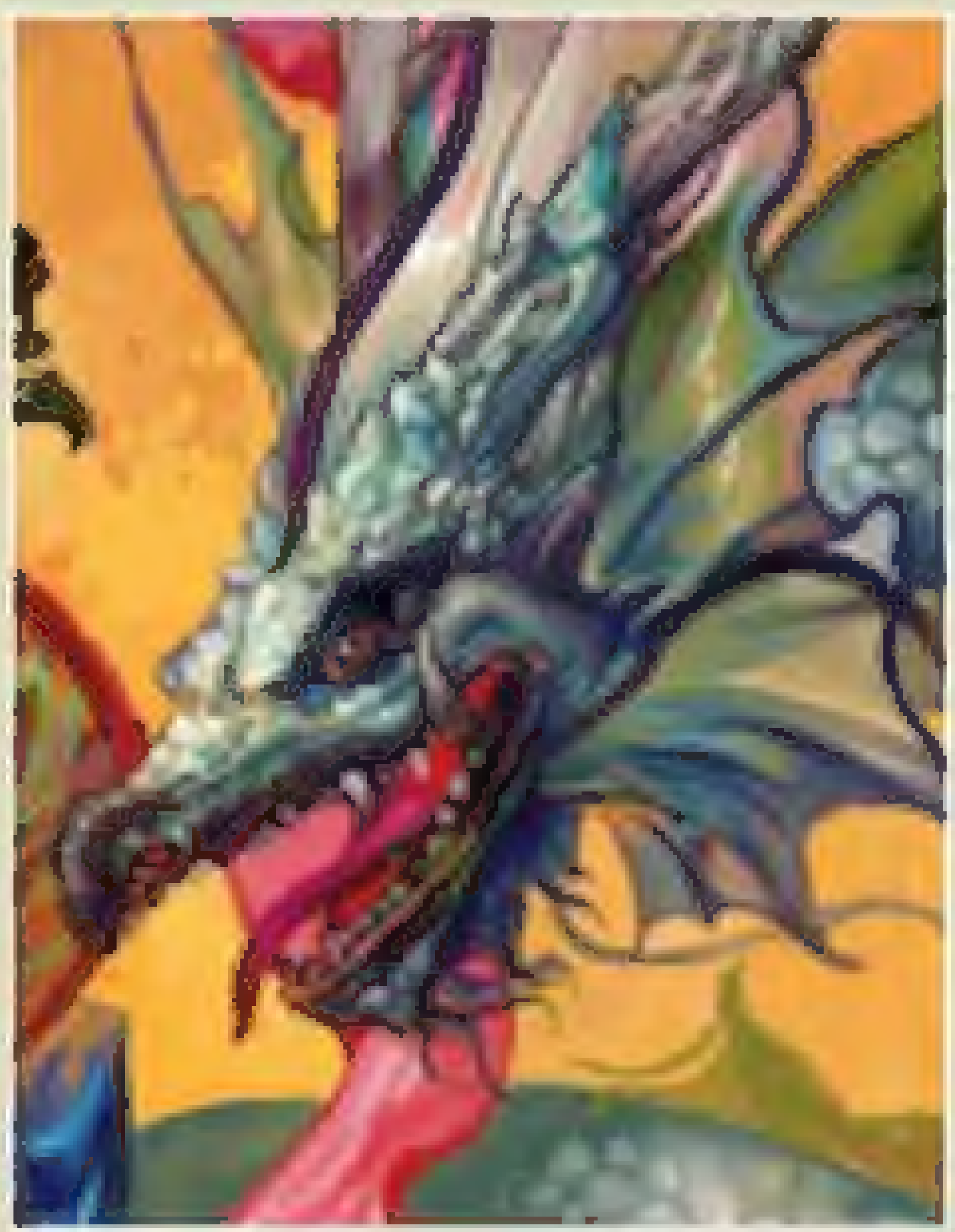
A girl and her dragon – it's a perfect cover…



Wanting a cover image that mixed traditional Chinese subjects with a western approach, Lorland was the ideal artist. It was a hard task choosing between Lorland's cover WIPs, but eventually the right composition began to emerge from the idea of a girl and her tamed dragon.



The first colour rough was striking – the contrast between the character and her vibrant background colour is irresistible. There's dispute over whether the girl needs to be looking out of the cover (a tradition in magazines), but a solution is found…



The dragon's eyes are made the focus. Lorland works on detailing the creature and giving it an engaging expression. The problem solved, it's only a matter of time and long hours of work, as Lorland puts the finishing touches to one of our most beautiful covers!

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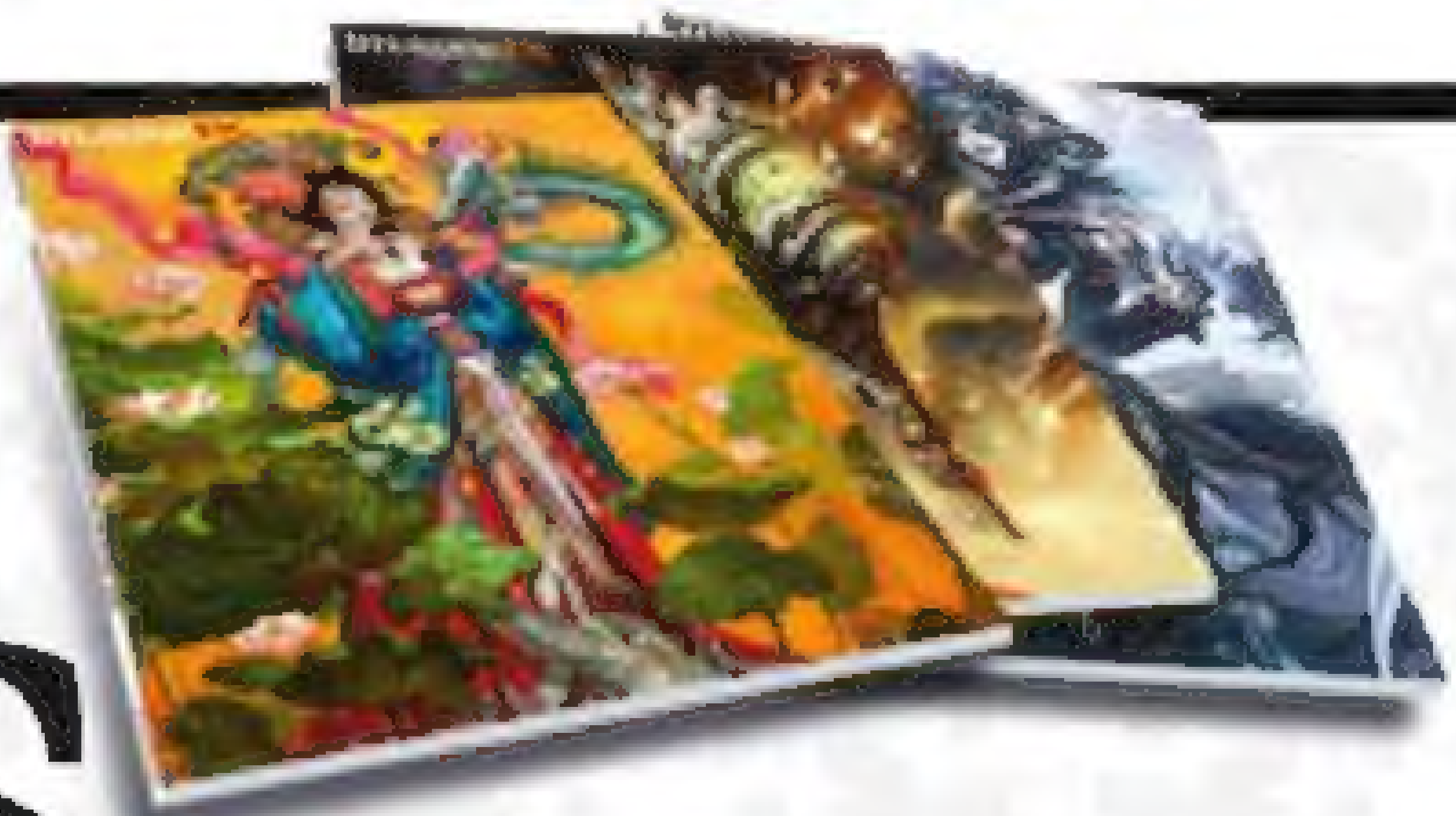

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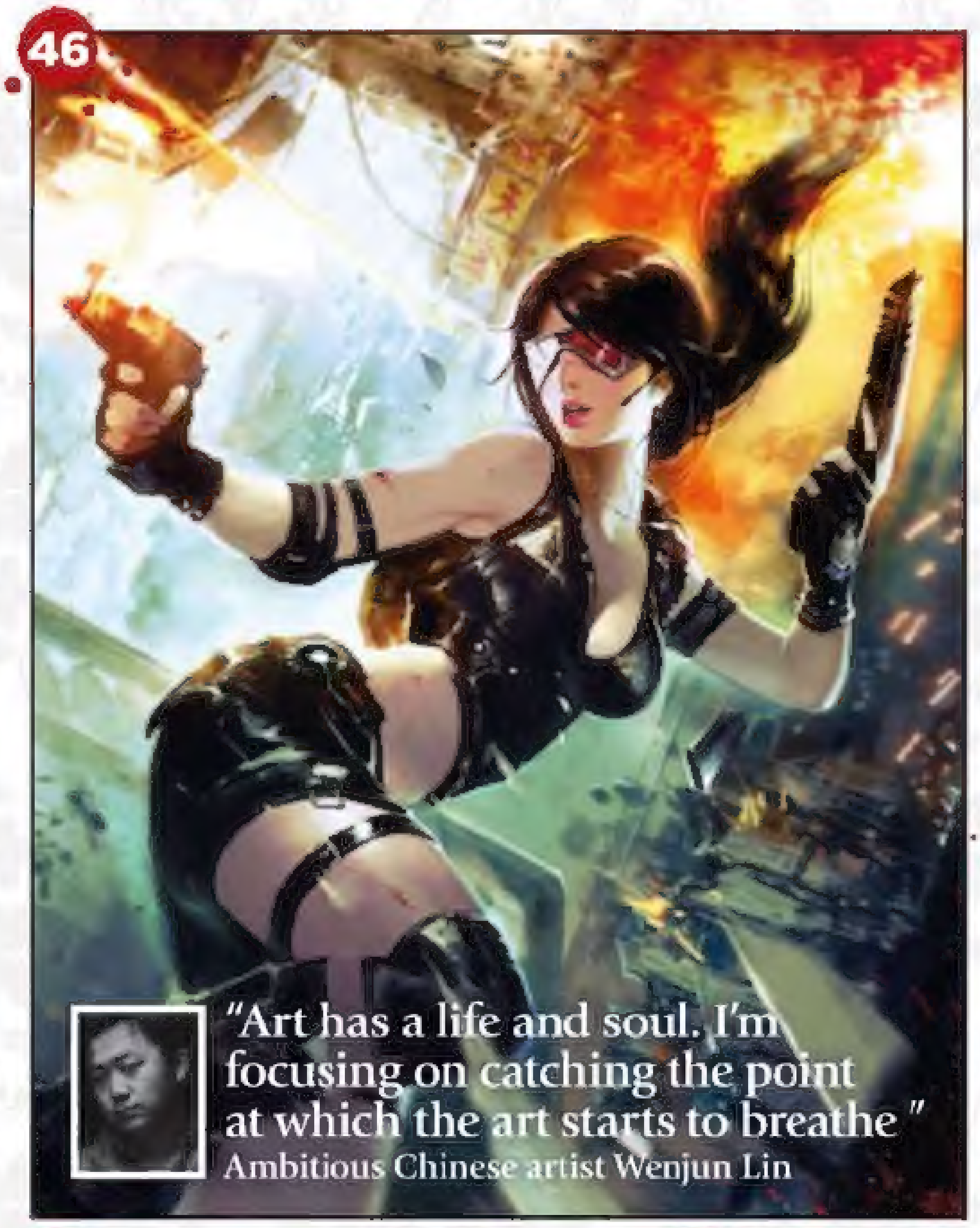
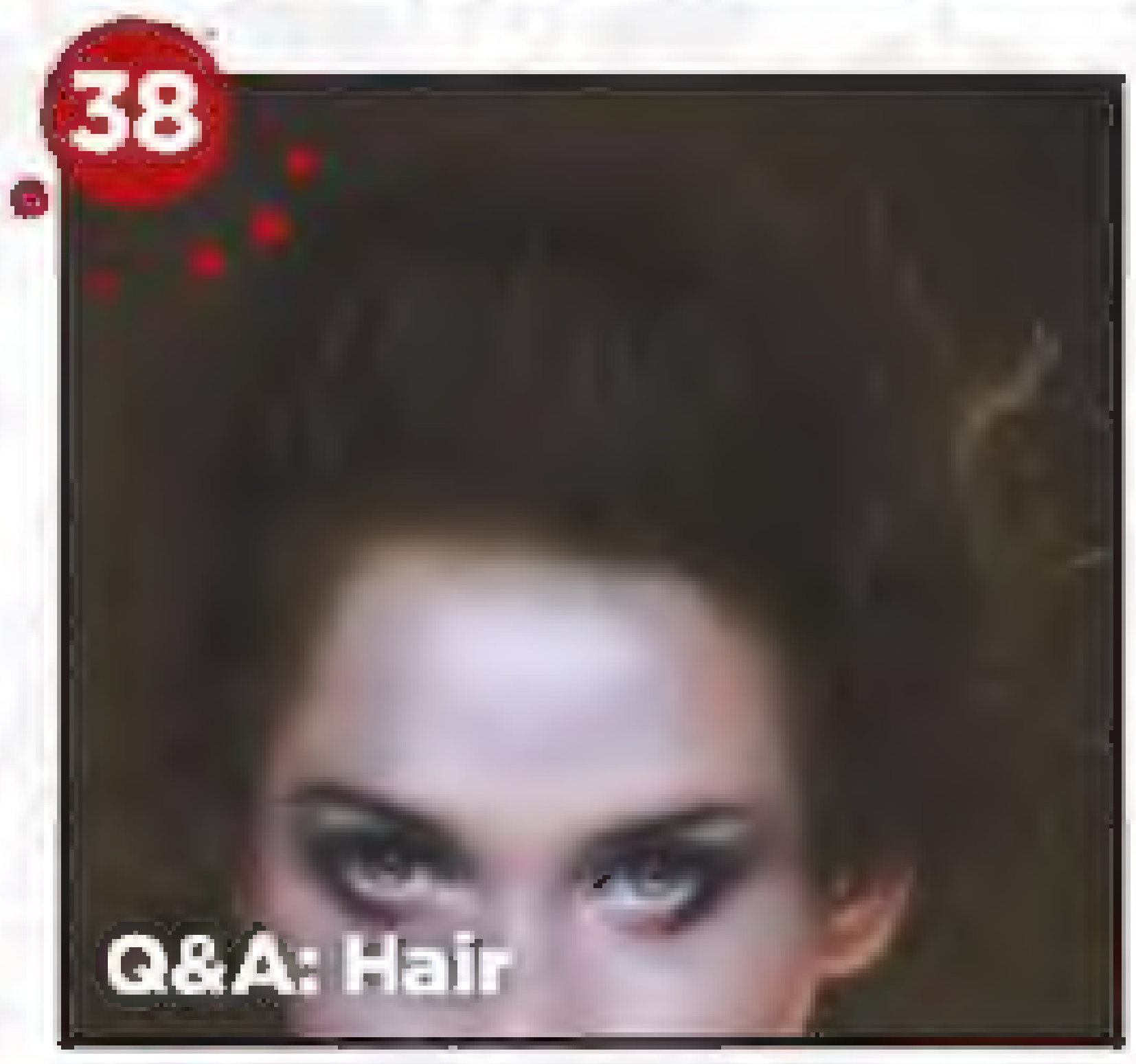


"Art has a life and soul. I'm focusing on catching the point at which the art starts to breathe"
Ambitious Chinese artist Wenjun Lin

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

See page 8 for the best new art »



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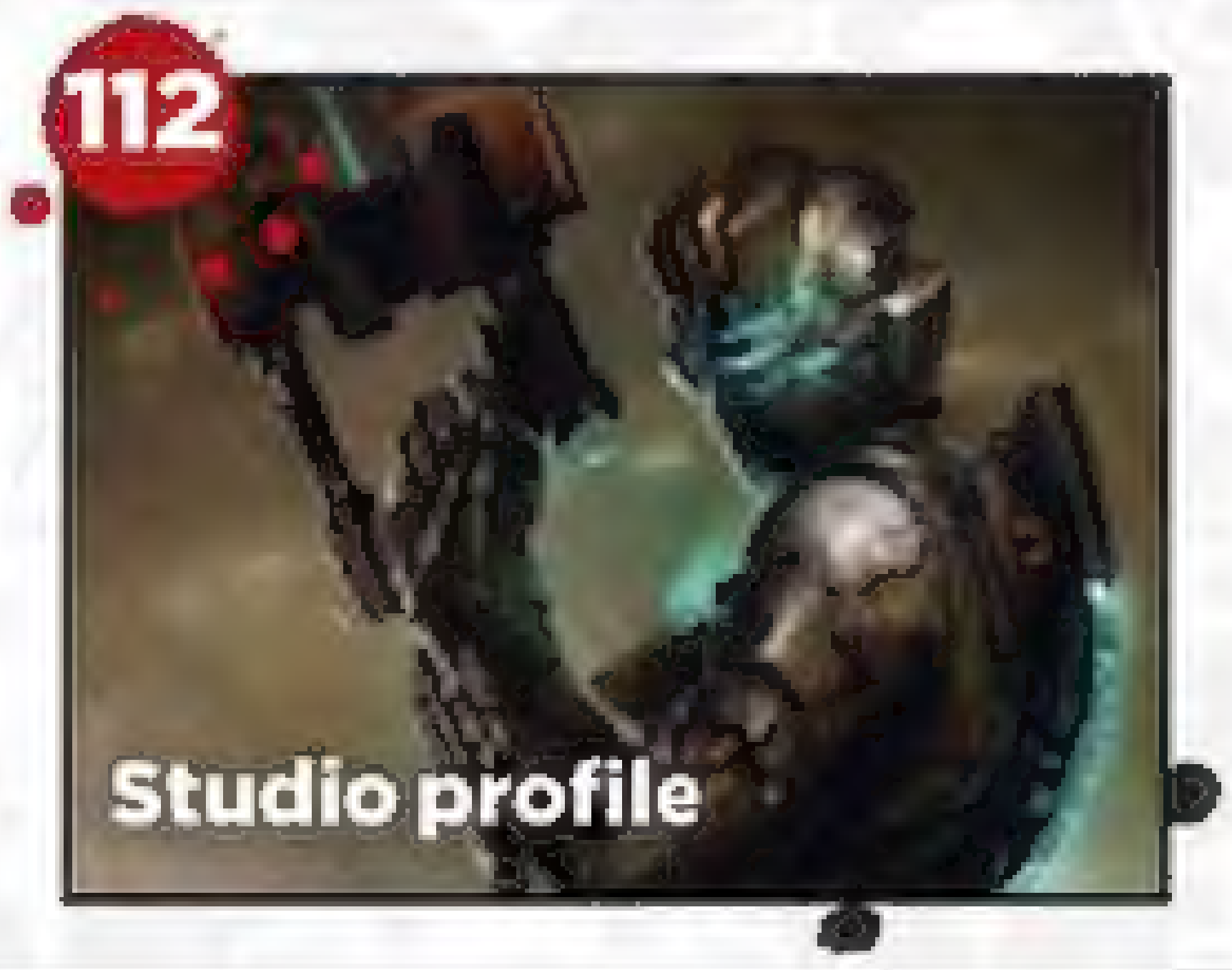

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Lorland Chen's image has beauty and realism.

74 The Monkey King at moonlight
The popular character is recreated by Jesper Ejsing.

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Ruan Jia's subtle colouring techniques.

86 Reimagining a fantasy classic
Young-june Choi paints a centaur in a new light.

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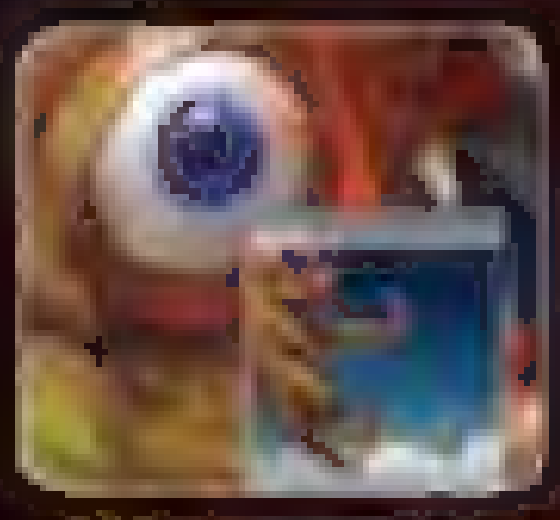
Sam Kennedy uses DAZ Studio to pose a battle.



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Artist Q&A

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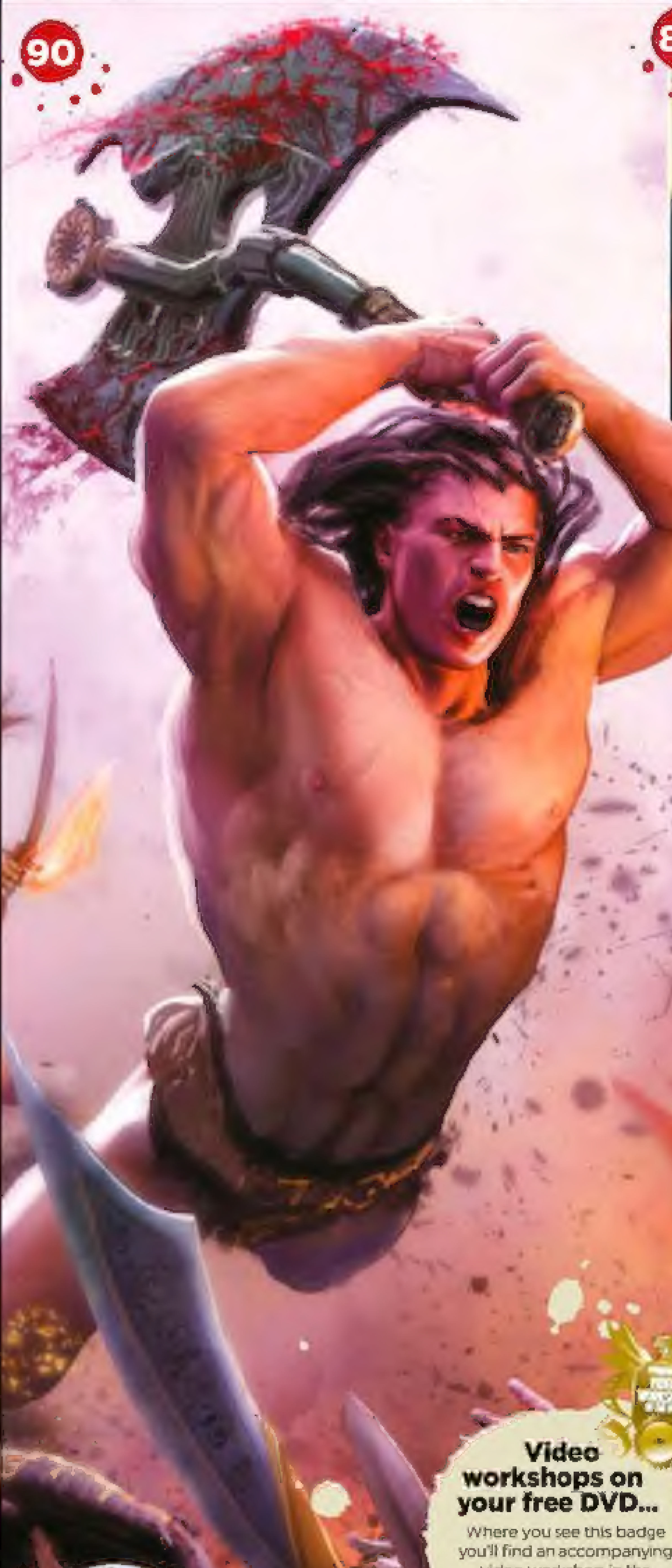
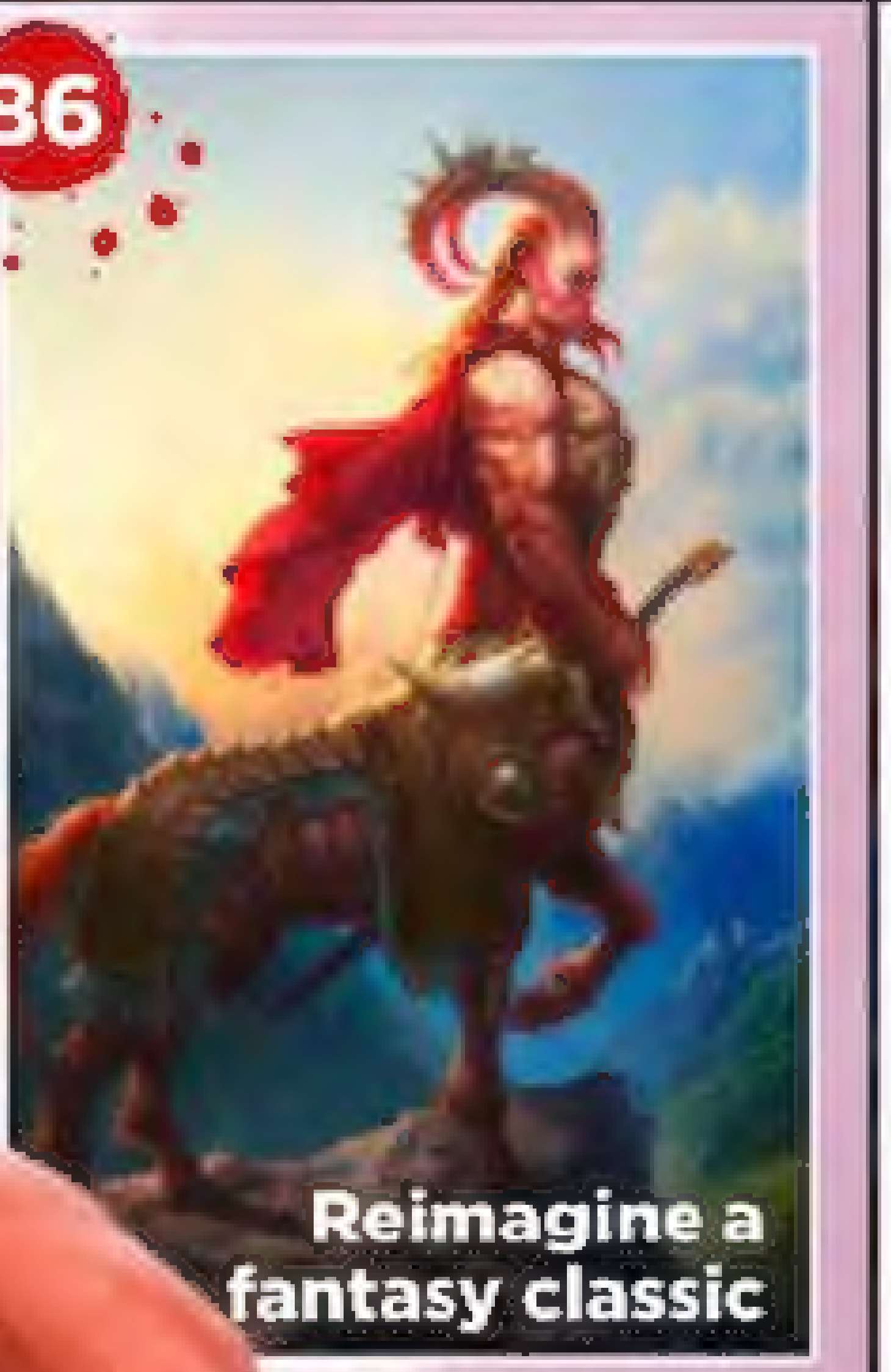
Interactions with glass, snowy scenes, impressive dwarf beards and more!





Reimagine a fantasy classic

Video workshops on your free DVD…

Where you see this badge you'll find an accompanying video workshop in the corresponding folder on your DVD.

Turn to page 114 for more…

ON YOUR DVD

This month's essential art resources…

Asian fantasy model bundle
Put these 3D assets into your art.

Over 200 photo references
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Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Yue Wang
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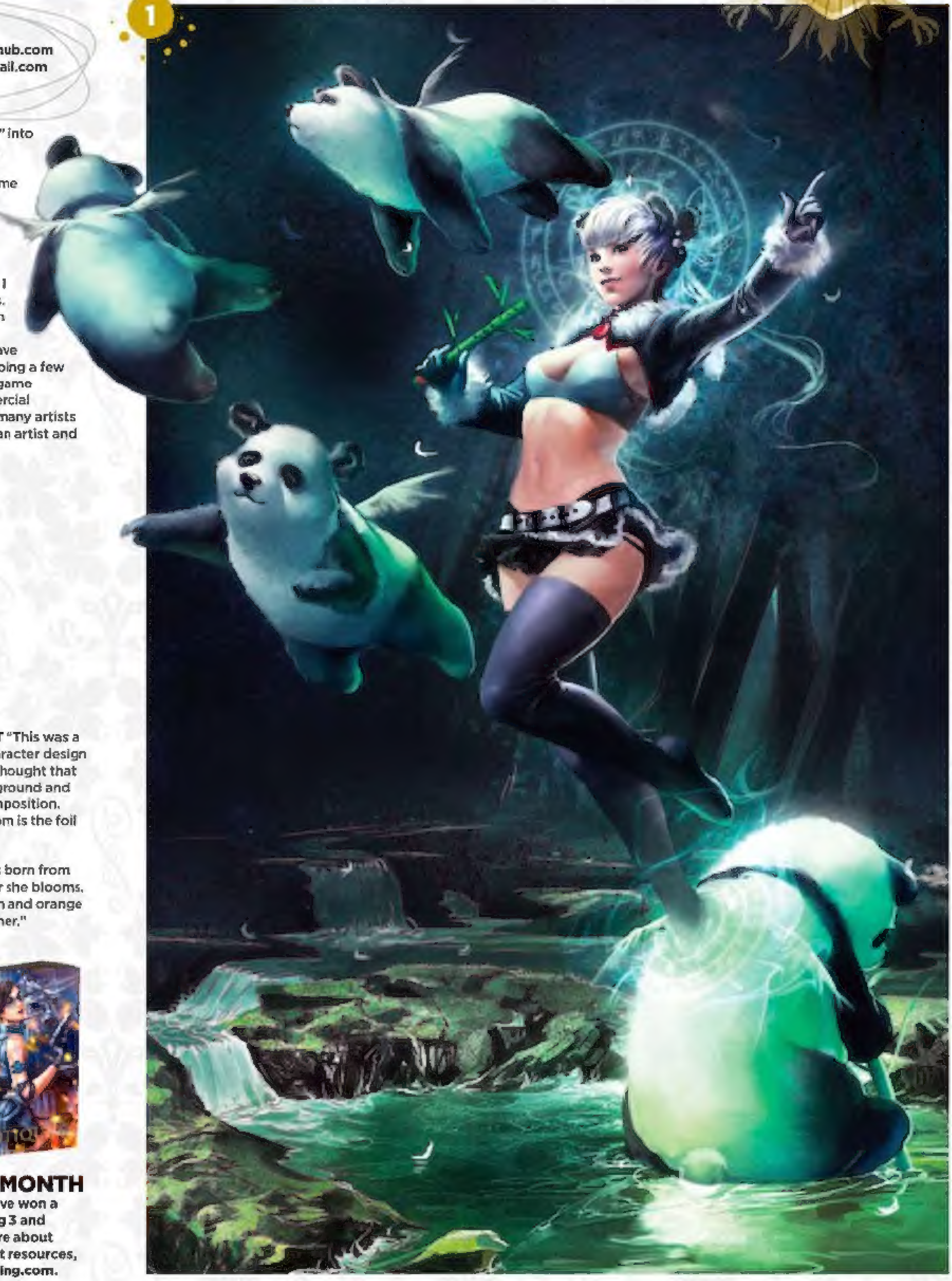
EMAIL: sakimi.chan@hotmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop

Yue "tumbled" into digital art one evening while chatting to some people in an online traditional art community. She noticed that everyone was doing digital art, so she thought she'd give it a shot too. "So I did, and I loved it," she says.

"I'm currently studying in 3D animation, I think it's important for an artist to have a bit of variation. I'm also doing a few contracts on the side for a game company and some commercial illustrations. My goal – like many artists – is to improve my skills as an artist and as a person."



1 PLAYFUL PANDA SPIRIT "This was a fun painting. It was a character design sheet originally, but then I thought that it'd be fun to add in a background and some pandas to form a composition. The lazy panda at the bottom is the foil of its spirit."

2 LEAF ELF LADY "She is born from nature, and like a flower she blooms. I wanted to see how a green and orange combination worked together."

ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Congratulations Yue – you've won a copy of Character Modeling 3 and Exotique 6! To find out more about these two indispensable art resources, go to www.ballisticpublishing.com.

Artist crit

Chester Ocampo has some kind words to say about Yue's alluring Leaf Elf Lady

"The lovely colour combination, delicate lighting, and that piercing gaze make for a very attractive portrait."

1

Danielle Marciniak

LOCATION: US
WEB: www.dmarciniak.com
EMAIL: dmillustrates@gmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Illustrator

A recent graduate of CCAD with a major in illustration, Danielle has always been interested in art and its role throughout history. "Artists like Mucha, James Jean and Golden Age illustrators are huge inspirations to me," she says, "and I also draw influence from a broad range of places – from mythology to body art."

Danielle is a tattoo apprentice and a freelance illustrator, and she's planning on going back to school to study for a degree in art history.

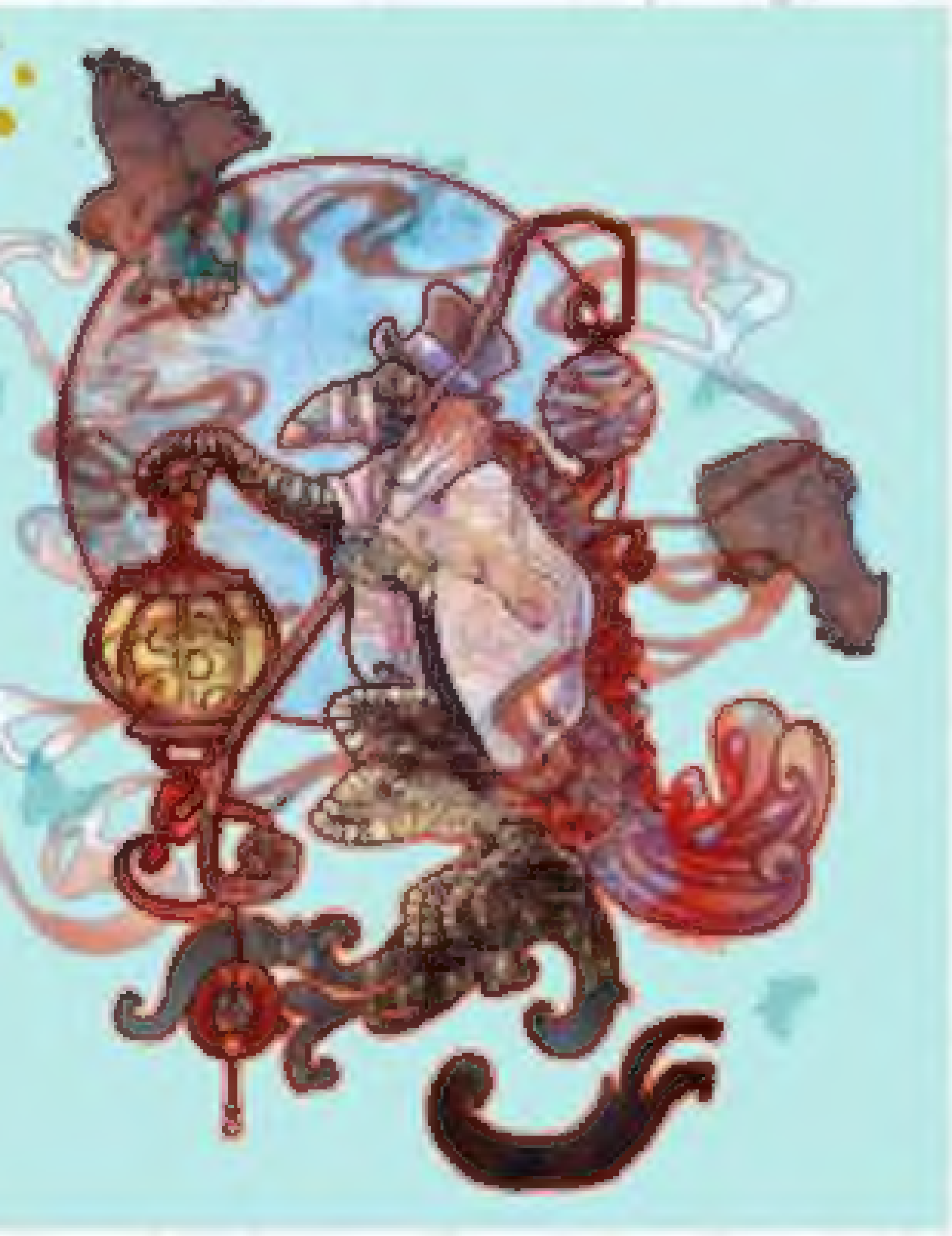
1 **SNAKE PIT** "The inspiration for this piece came from icebergs. I wanted to do a highly detailed piece that causes you to become engrossed as you try to figure out how many beasts are actually laying in the ocean waiting to attack. Is it one, two or hundreds?"

2 **SILK ROAD GYPSY** "I focused on creating a design that blended European and Asian mythologies. I'd imagine that these creatures would travel the old Silk Road, playing pranks on travellers and collecting lightning bugs for their lanterns."

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Danielle's confident painting style gives the underwater areas of her Snake Pit image extra depth (no pun intended). You feel as if you could almost part the seaweed, to see what else is lurking in the watery shadows."
Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

2



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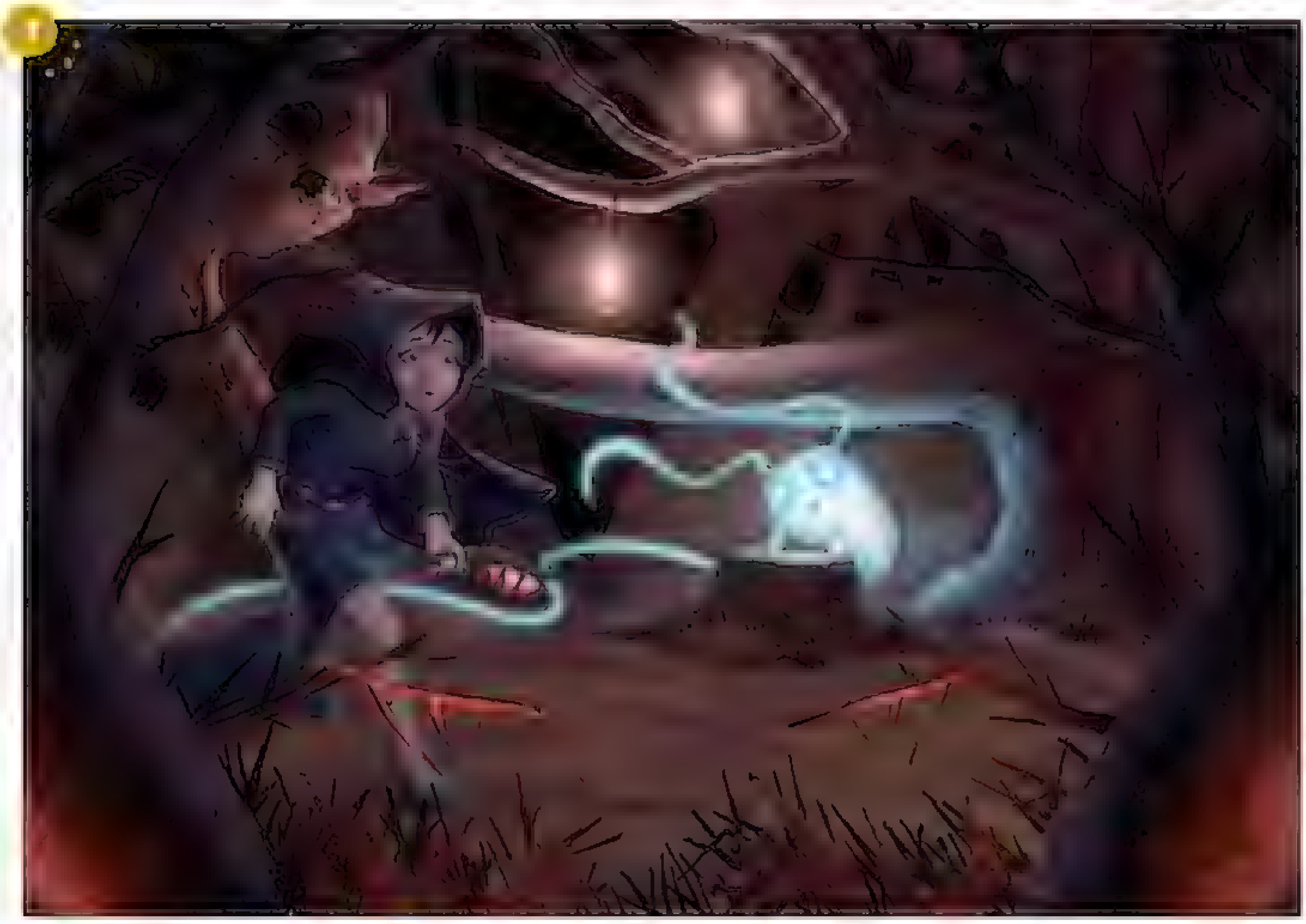


Mike Burns
LOCATION: US
WEB: www.artburns.blogspot.com
EMAIL: mrburns928@aol.com
Photoshop

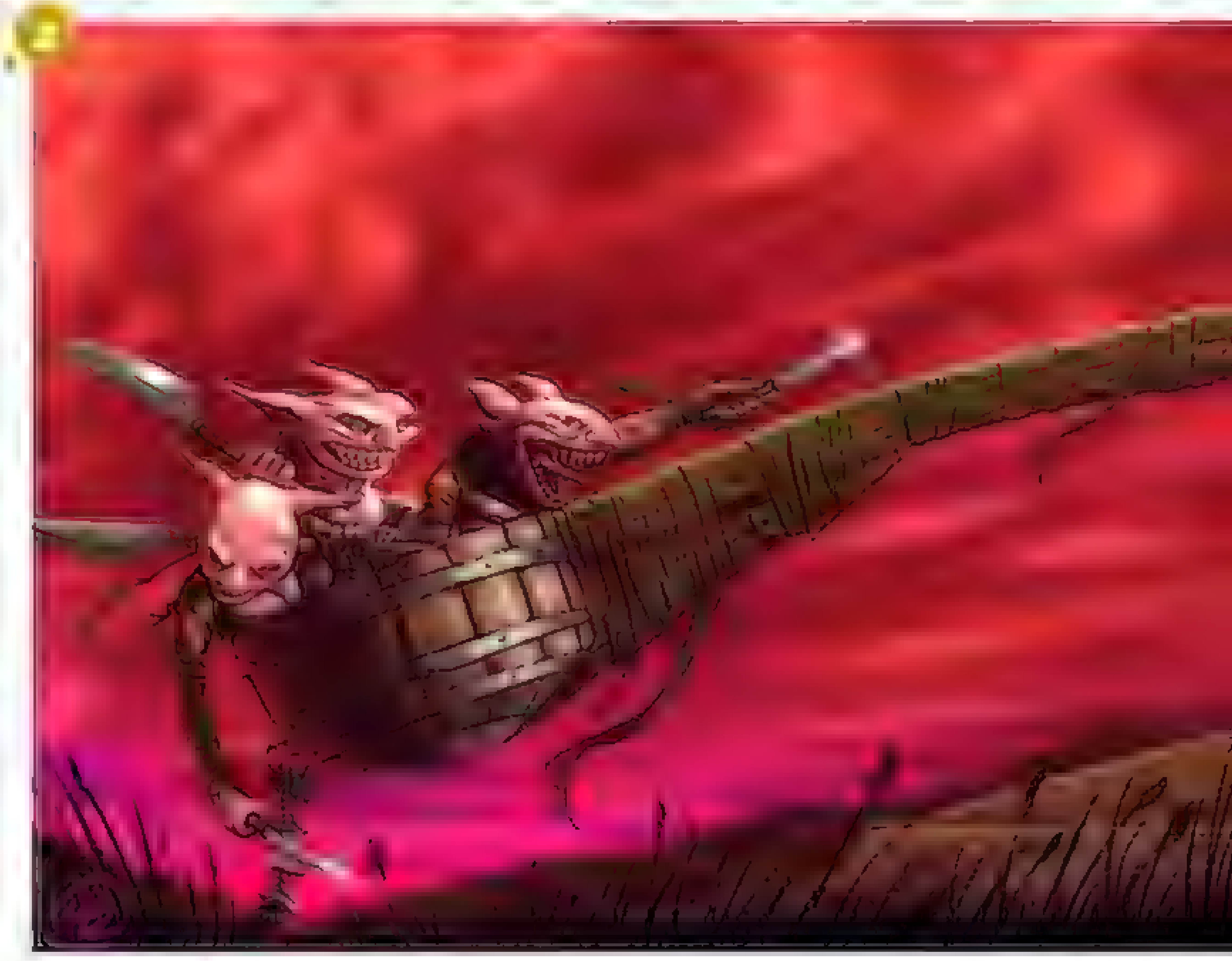
Having recently graduated from Syracuse University's College of Visual and Performing Arts, Mike's first experience with digital was in his sophomore year of high school, where he taught himself Photoshop.

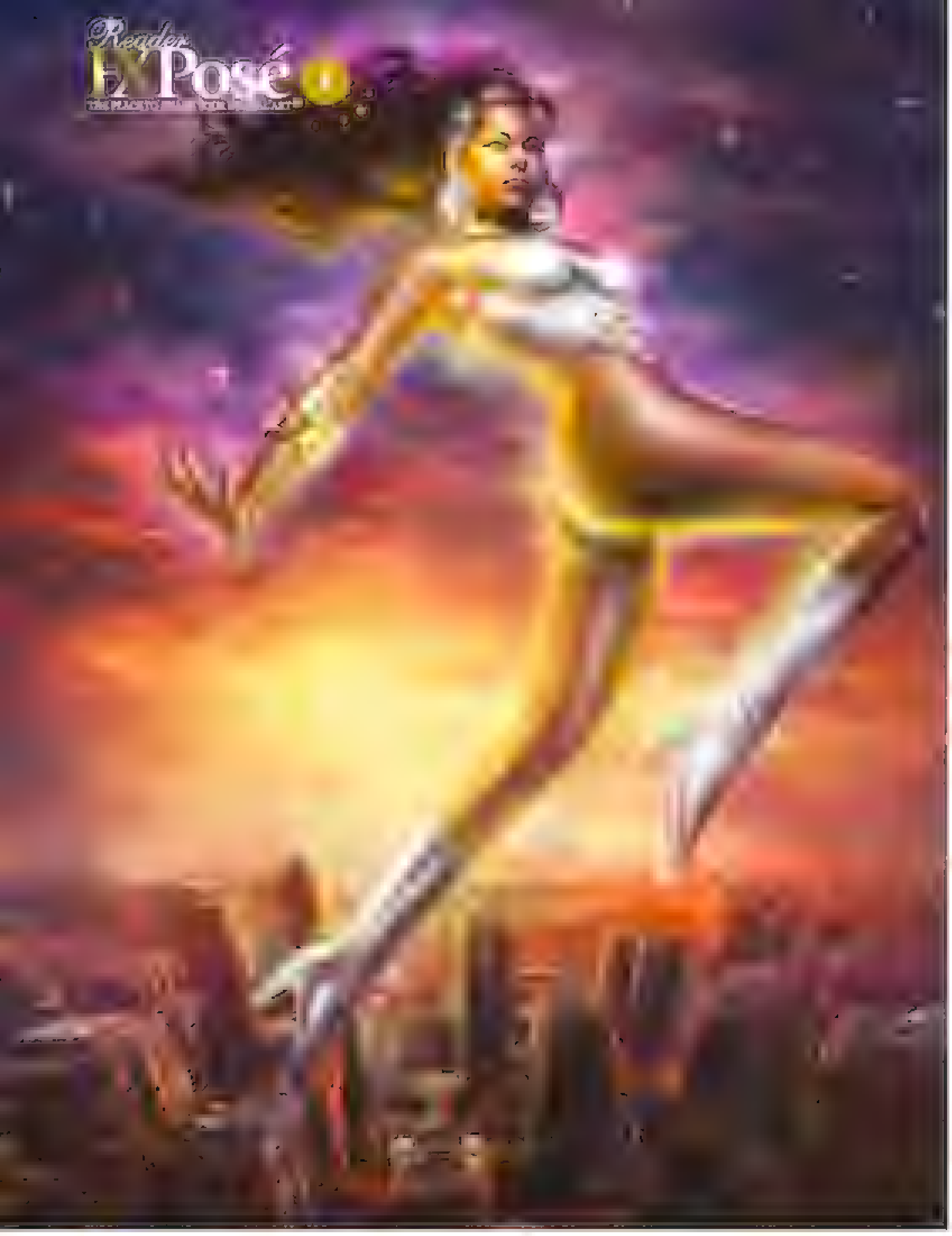
Mike tries to infuse his work with humour when suitable, and is illustrating his first children's book that depicts that side of his art. "I'm also finishing work as a colourist for the second issue of the Blue Shift webcomic for Seed Studios," he says, "with fellow artists Dave DeVries and John Van Fleet." The comic is published on MTV Geek

1 **THE ENCOUNTER IN THE WOODS** "I came up with the idea for this piece after I did a couple of drawings of the characters in my sketchbook. After flipping back and forth between the different pages they were on, I thought it was about time they met each other in a full-on illustration."

2 **GOBLIN LAUNCHER** "I did this piece as a mock job for Magic: the Gathering. I want to work with Wizards of the Coast so I thought it would be a good idea to do a practice piece for one of its products. I based my goblins on the ones seen in Scars of Mirrodin."

2





Allen Michael N. Geneta

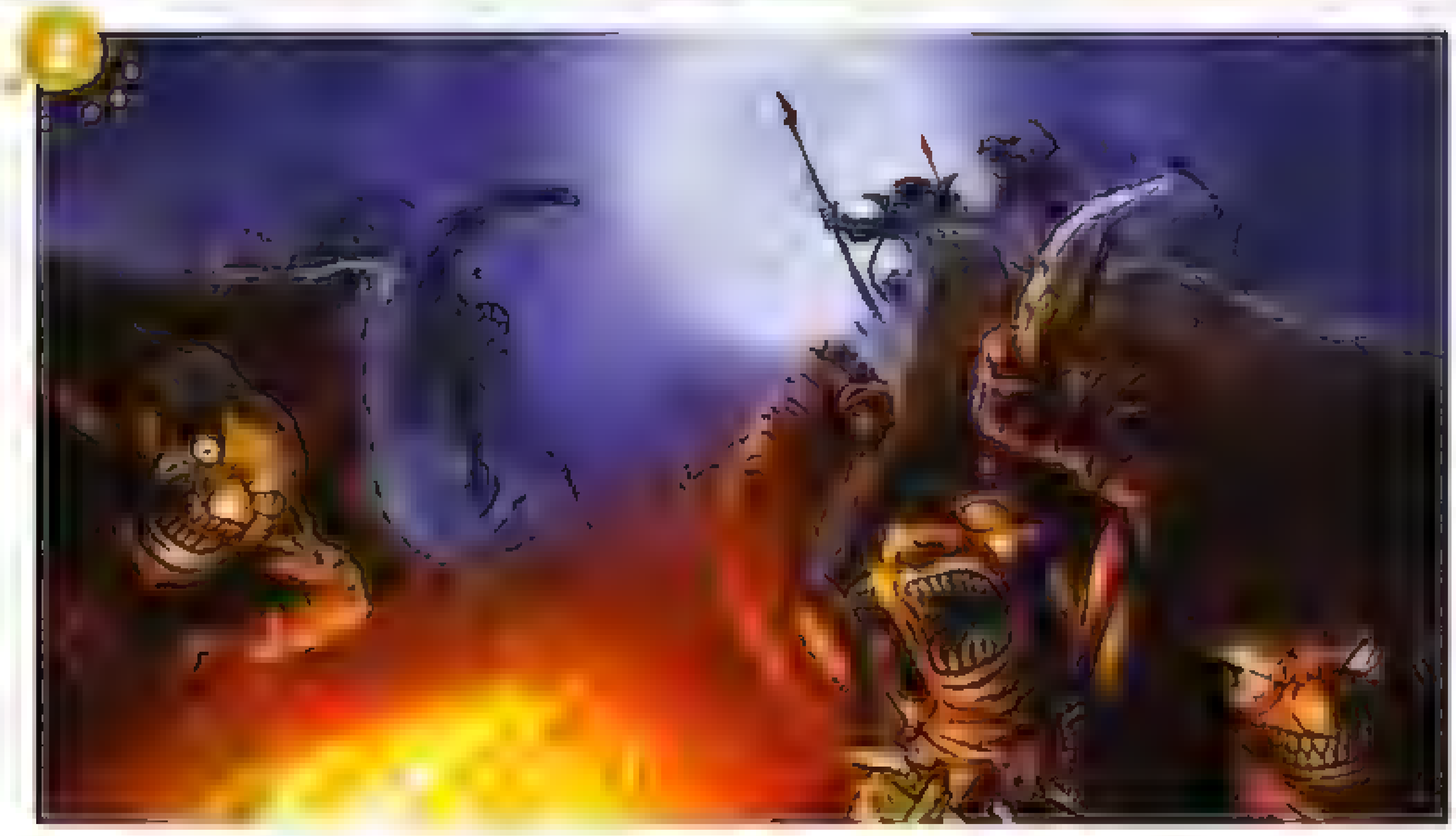
Philippines
http://allentotingski.deviantart.com
allentotingski@yahoo.com
Photoshop

Living in the Philippines and working as a concept/3D artist for Ladyluck Digital Media, Allen first got hooked on digital art when a small mobile gaming company hired him. "Then I met the great artists that I work with today" he says, "and they taught me the basics of digital art, before we transferred to Ladyluck Digital Media."

Here Allen "level upped" his 2D digital skills and managed to work with some of the company's best digital painters. "Today, I'm really glad to be where I am, living the dream of working as a 2D digital concept artist."

ESTRELLA "Here's an indie comic book character created by Jeri Barrios. This piece was originally commissioned for an exhibit in one of the biggest malls in the Philippines."

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS "This image started as a practice piece for multiple characters in one image. I got carried away and eventually took it to completion. This was also inspired by Dungeons & Dragons characters."



"Allen captures a very special luminosity in his Estrella image. The bity graphical glow of the stars and landscape gives it a retro superhero feel. The character's active posture helps elevate the painting, too."

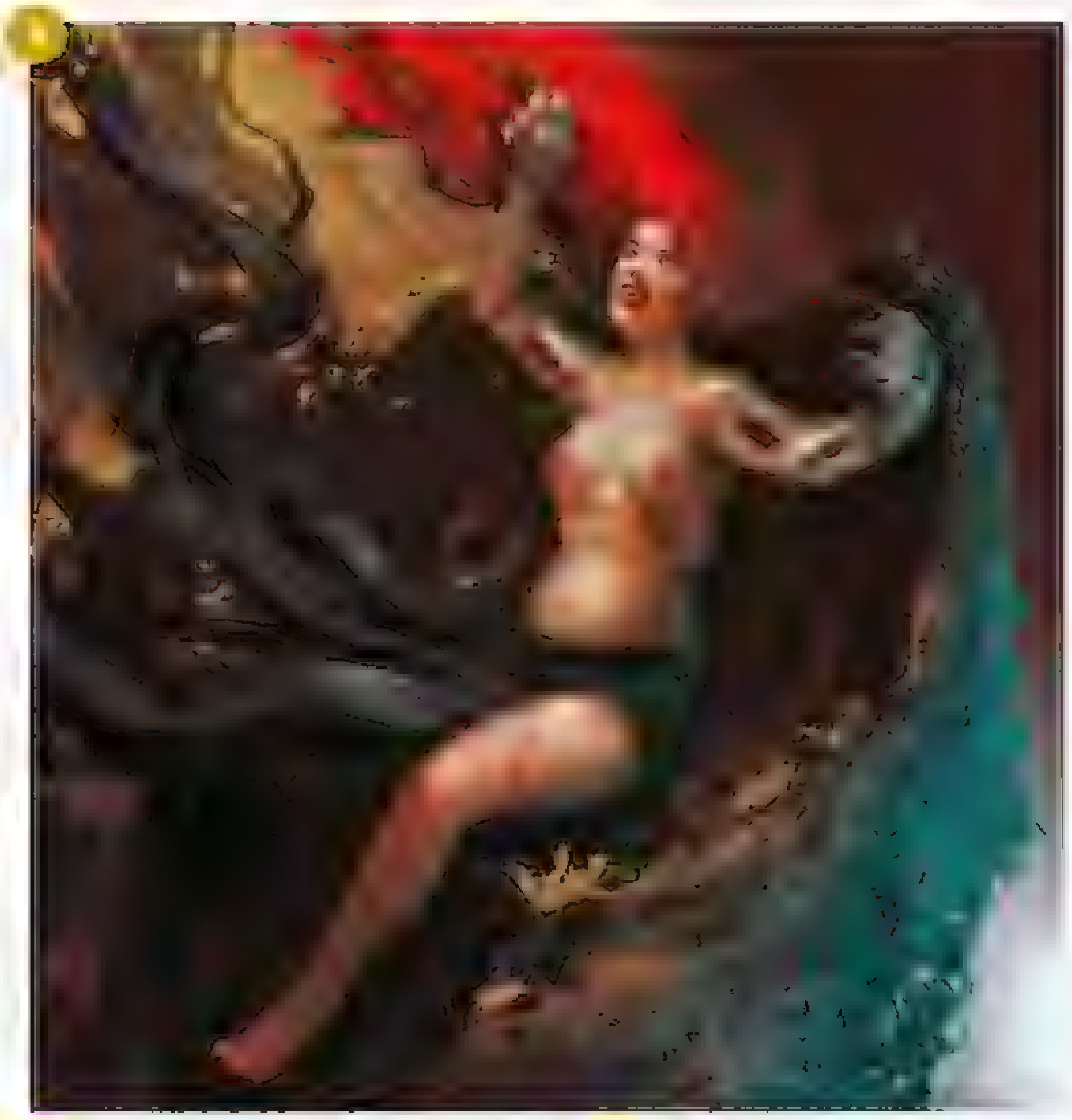
GreekTags.com

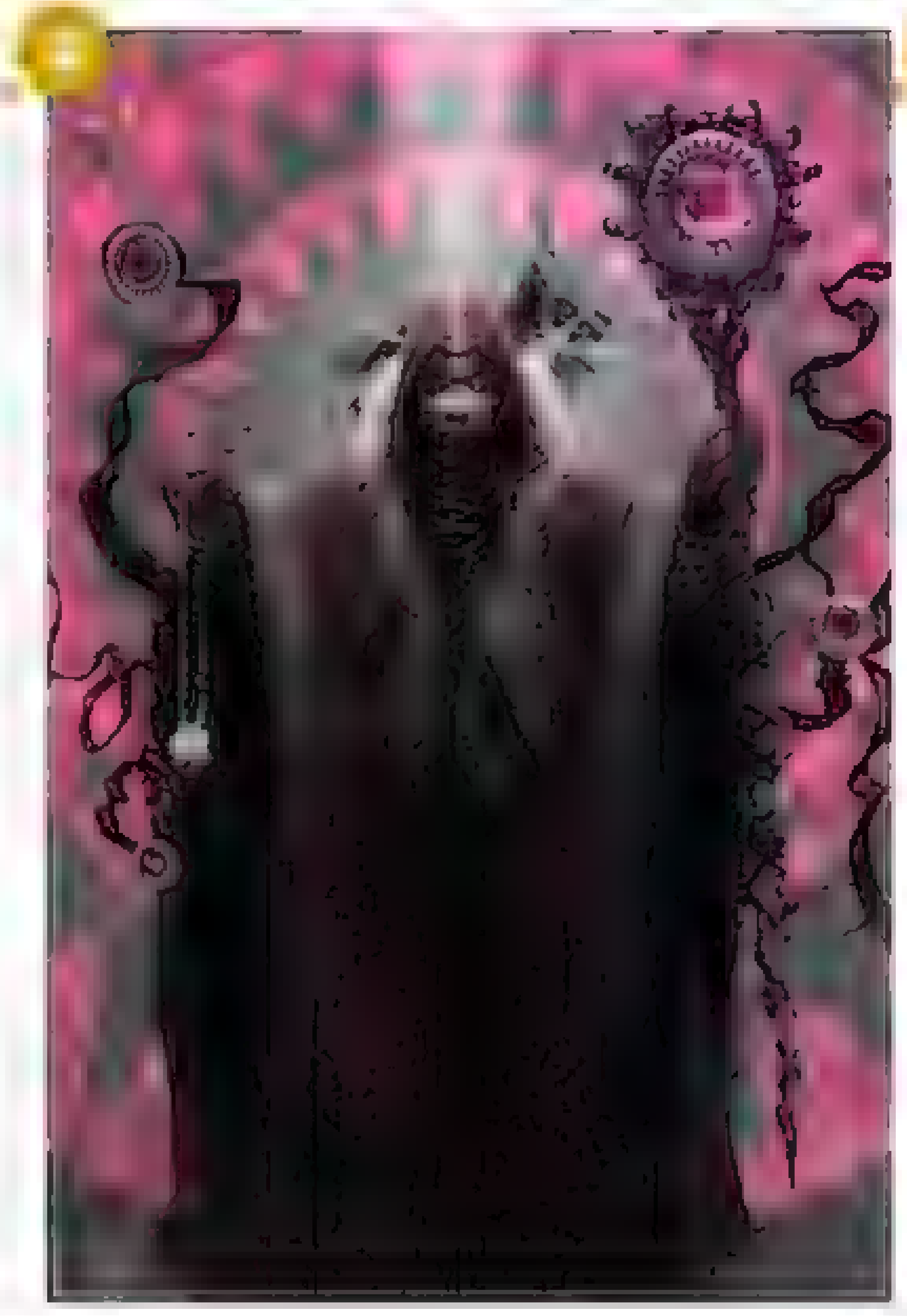
Lennart Verhoeff

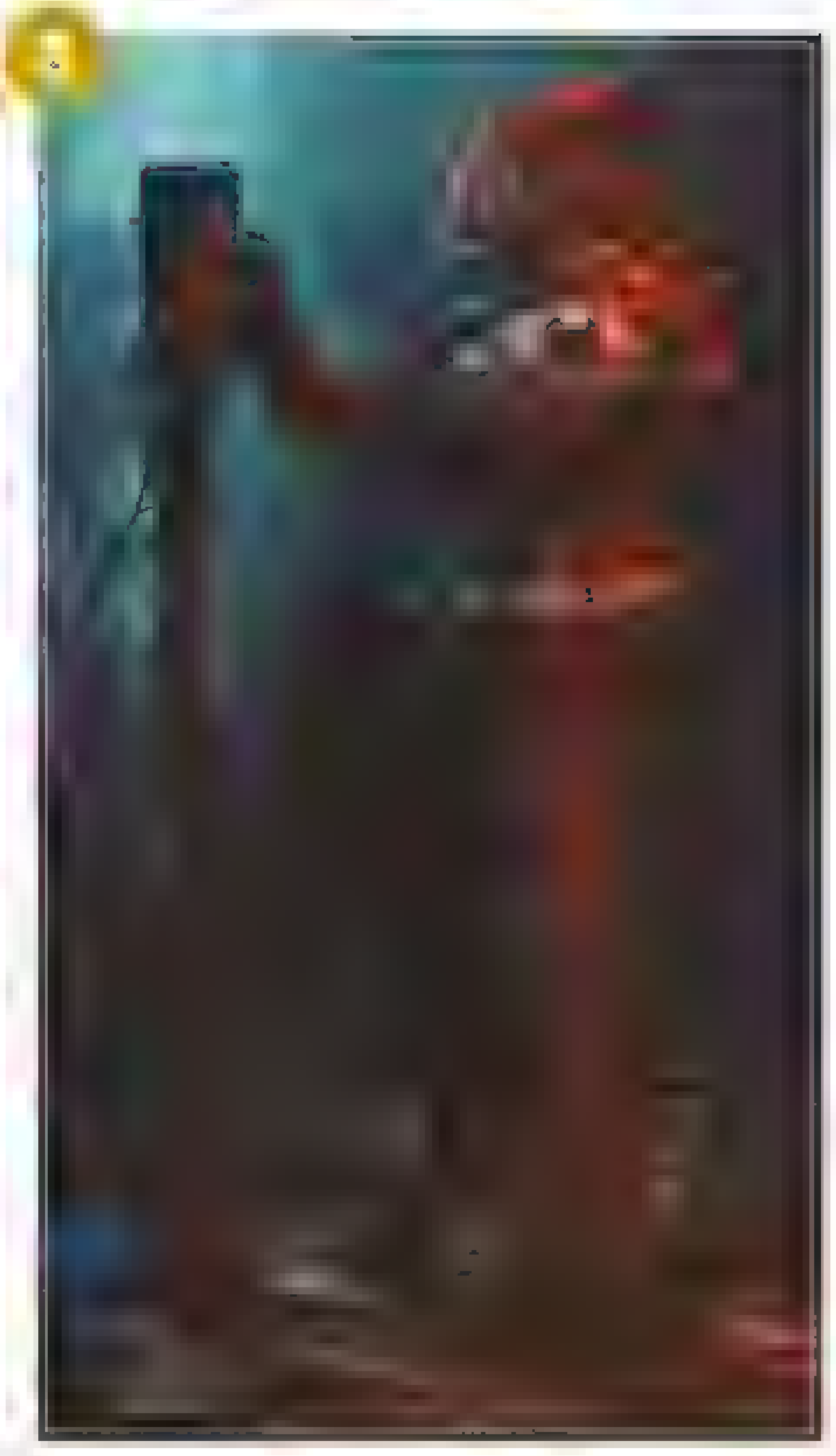
Netherlands
www.lennartverhoeff.net
pixeltuner@gmail.com
Photoshop, Illustrator, Alchemy

"I'm pretty much the typical 'when I was young I was drawing all the time' guy," says Lennart. "I used to draw monsters, warriors and mostly fighting game characters, especially the Capcom ones."

Later on he got into graphic design and quit "proper" drawing, except for the odd piece of vector work. "Then in 2005 I got my first videogame job as a 2D artist at a casual games company," Lennart recalls. "I got introduced to Wacom and Conceptart.org respectively, and the rest is history."







1 FALLEN "The classic fallen angel. I often need to force myself to try more dynamic poses because I work mostly like a designer, so this image started like falling woman which slowly turned into this monstrous vampire-angel-thing. I like suggesting things with graphic shapes, such as the wings. I've got quite a short attention span so I don't want to spend two hours drawing feathers. I'll turn a vector shape into a custom wing brush and give it a neat little touch in the process."

2 BLACK MAGE "This was done for a Conceptart.org character of the week challenge. The staff was supposed to represent the power of the mage (darkness in this case) so I essentially made it a big monster mouth. There's lots of graphic design-type stuff going on here as well."

3 SMOKE BREAK "A little soldier outfit design idea turned into a story of a guard about to be ambushed."

Joseph Foo

England
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Photoshop

Being inspired by a high-school friend's manga-style doodles, Joseph joined the world of art at the age of 17. "After high school I entered a local art college in Malaysia and was taught the basics – sketching, composition, light and mood," he says. "I also started attending conventions and selling self-published books (doujinshi), prints, merchandises around Asian countries including Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, Japan and Australia. It was a really good experience."

Now studying at England's Birmingham Institute of Art and Design, Joseph's finishing off his degree while keeping busy taking commissions when he can

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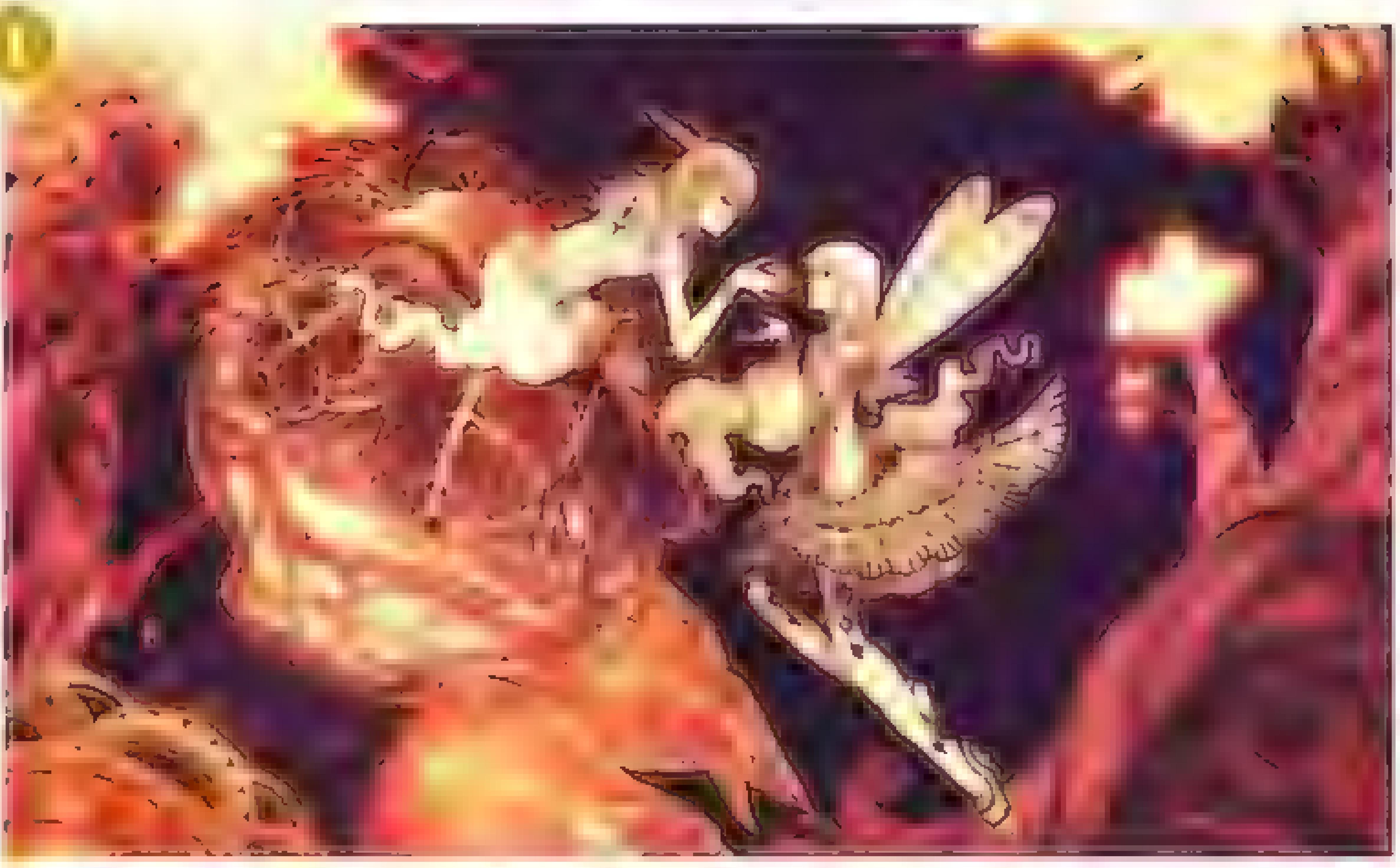

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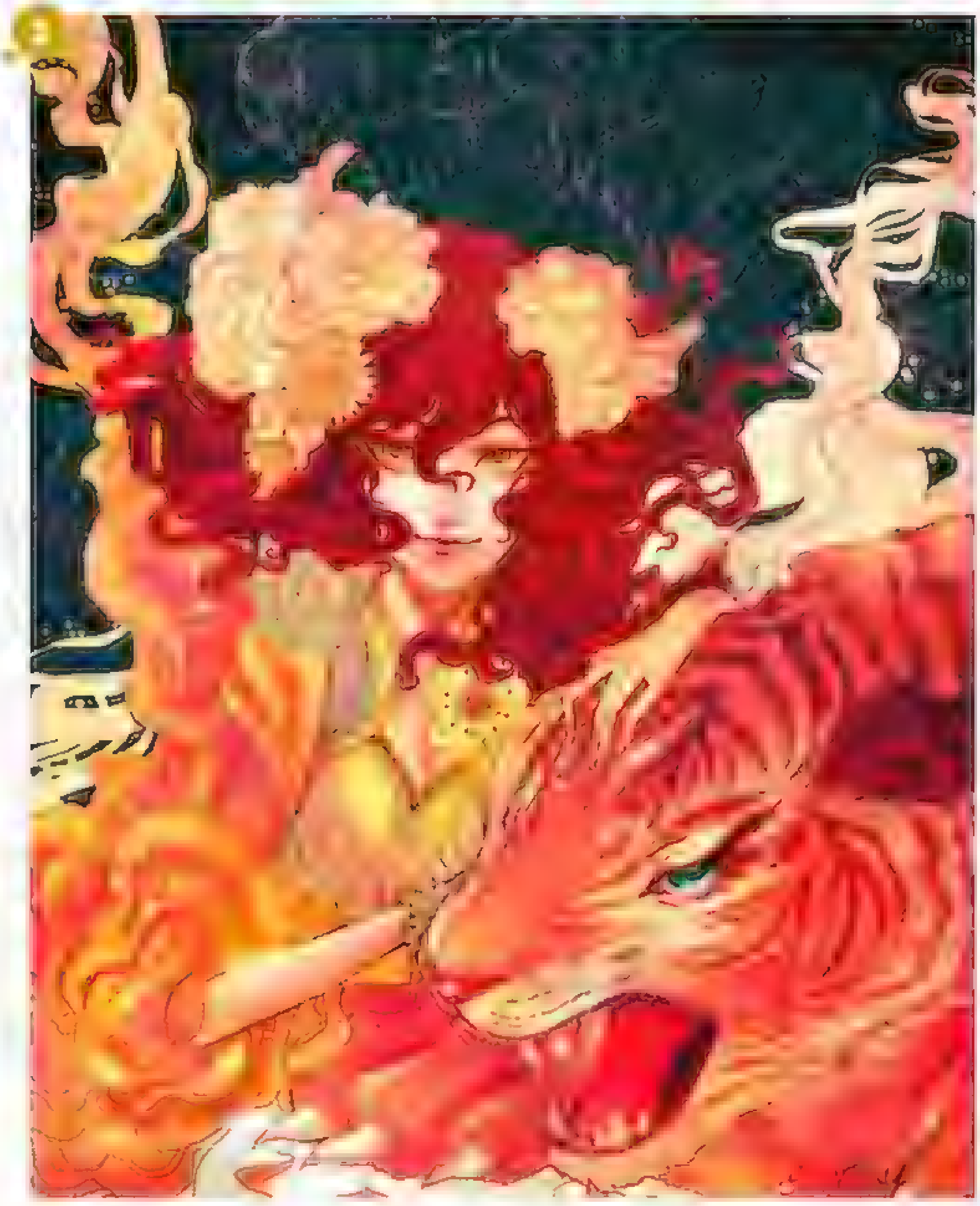
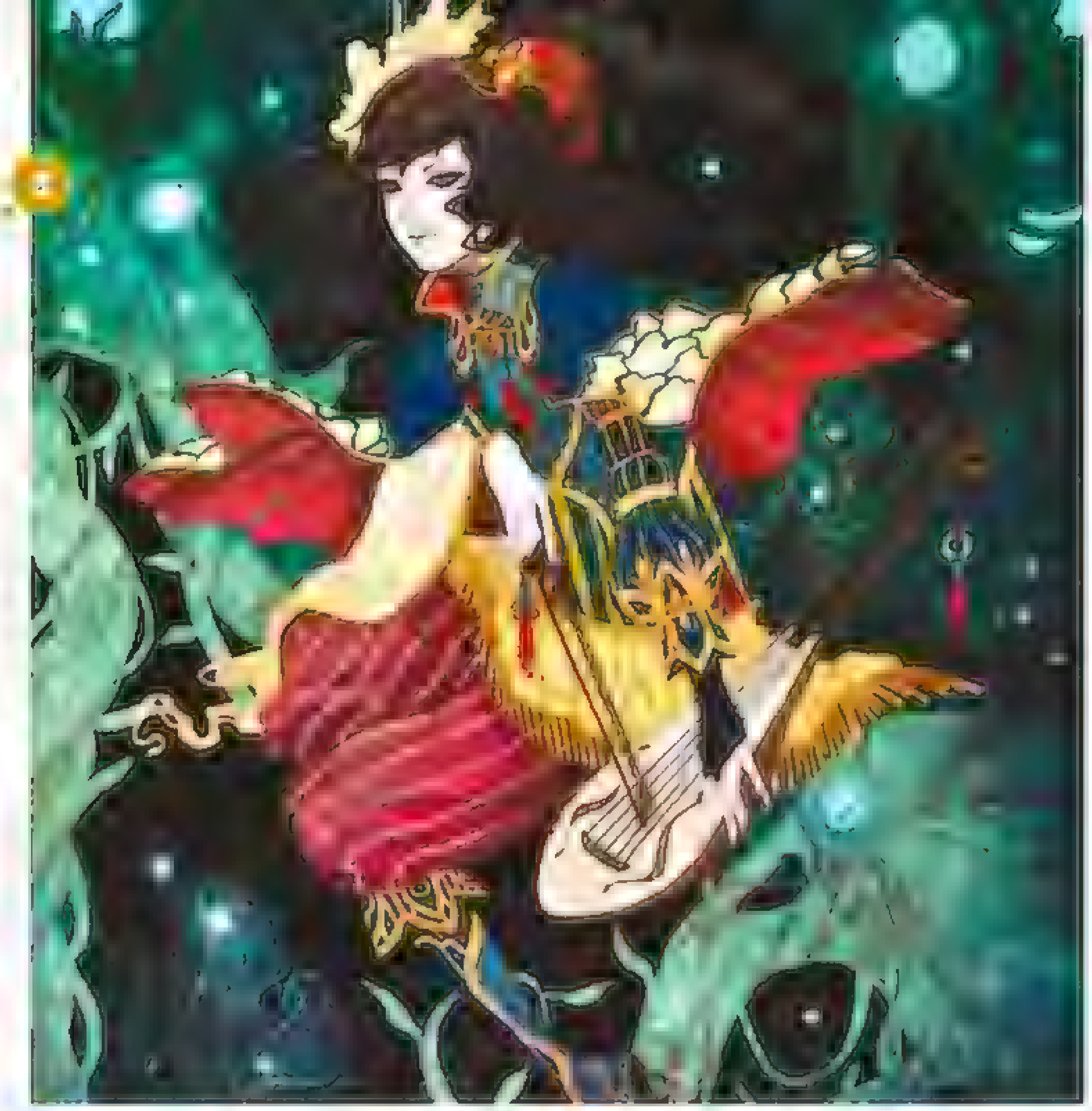


1 **THE MIDNIGHT RITUAL** "I've been obsessed with fairy tales ever since I was small, especially the darker ones, and I wanted to create one of my own. This piece is about betrayal, lust for power and consequences."

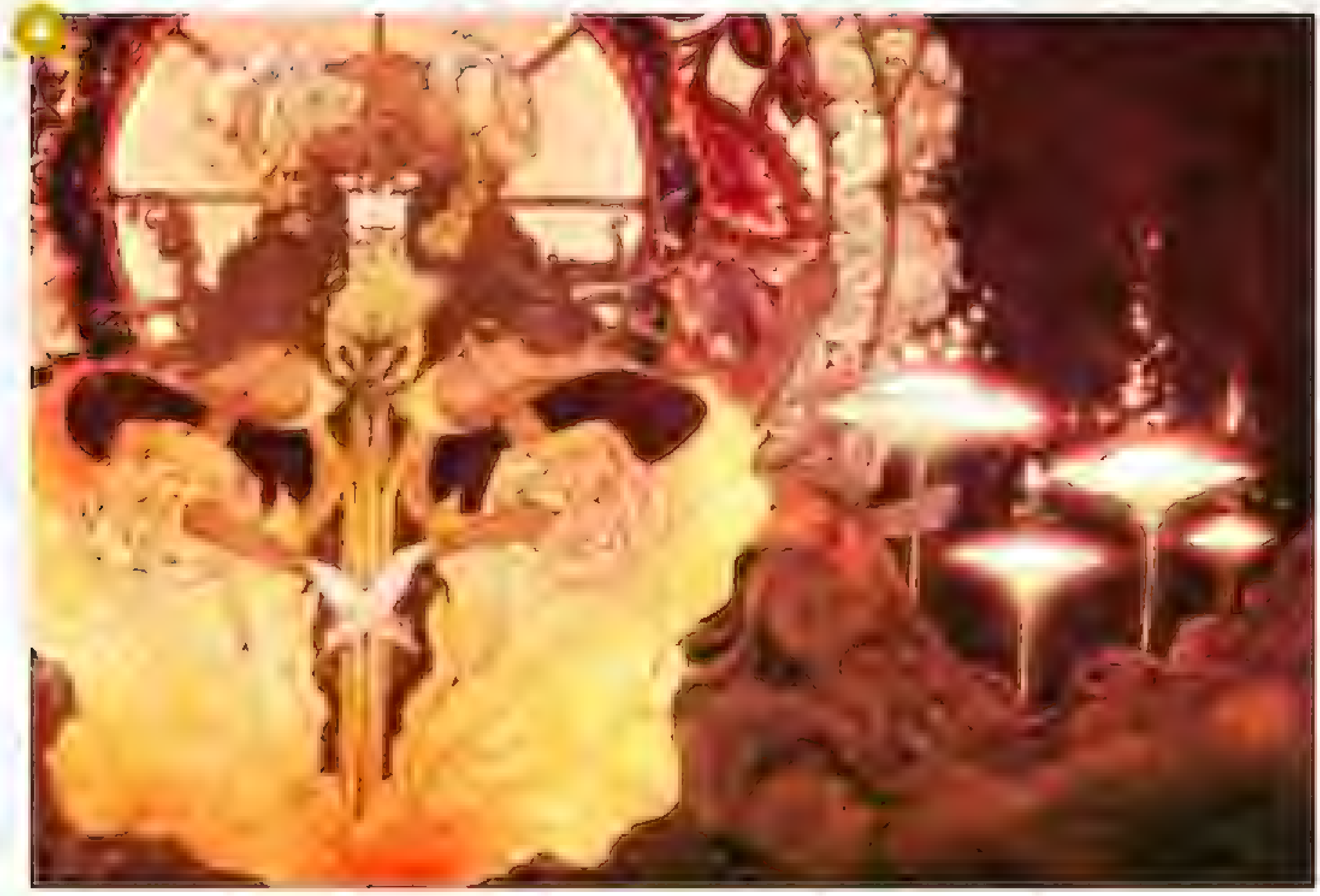
2 **TIGER LILY** "I was watching Disney's Peter Pan one day and I really liked the name of the red Indian princess Tiger Lily. Chinese New Year was just around the corner so I decided to draw a girl with a tiger."

3 **BALLAD** "Another thing that I'm obsessed with is Chinese instruments. I love the detailed patterns and carvings and the melancholic tune that the lute and fiddle makes. It gives me a very nostalgic feeling."

4 **SECRET GARDEN** "This was the cover for my art book titled Capriccio. It's also one of the drawings from my fairy tale series. I'd just started experimenting with textures when I worked on this piece and was pleased with the results."



“Inspired by Chinese culture and Western narratives, Joseph’s style is his own. There’s something satisfying in such finely detailed digital illustration that’s unified with both warm and cold colours. It gives an image like Tiger Lily an extra depth.”

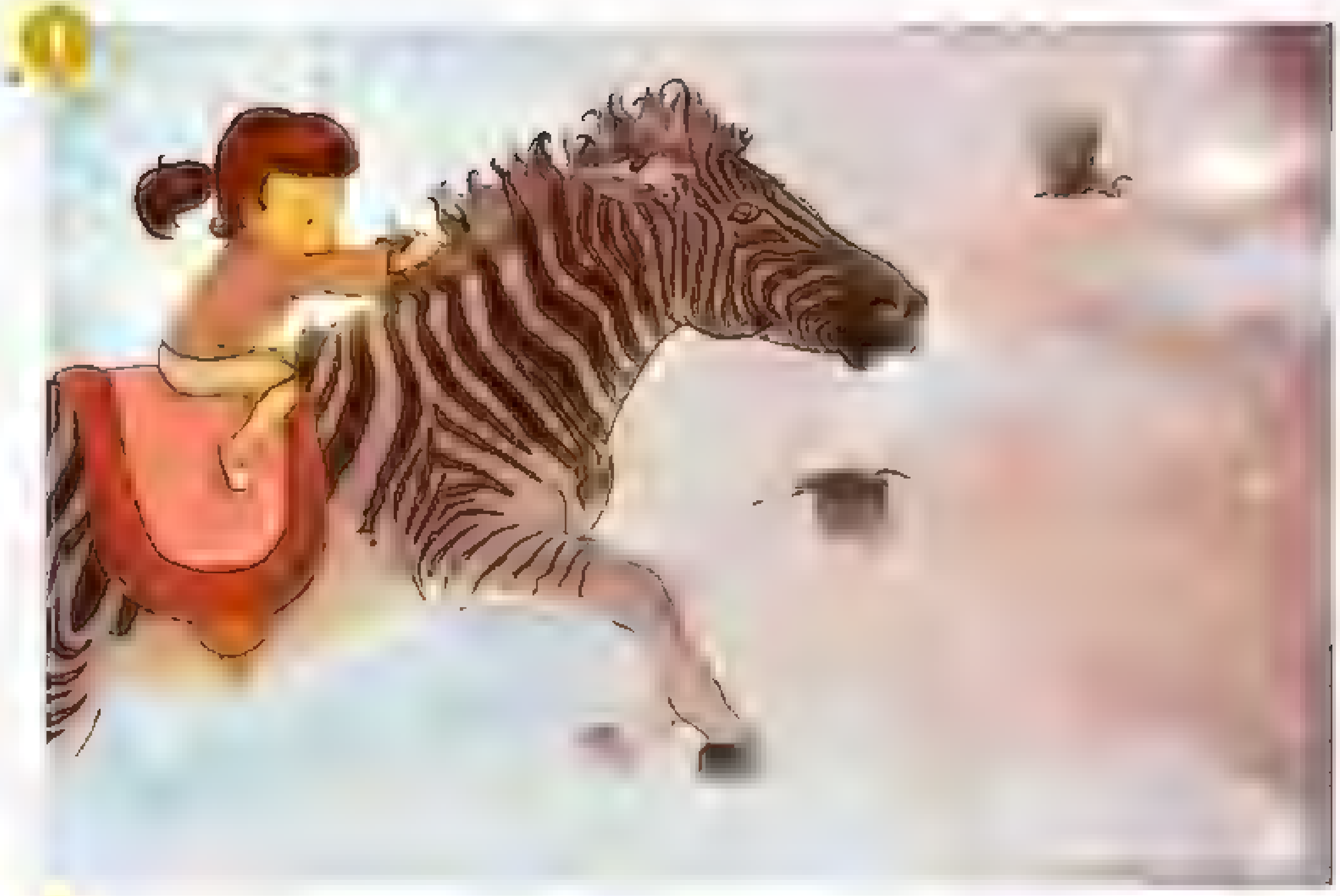


Gabby Correia

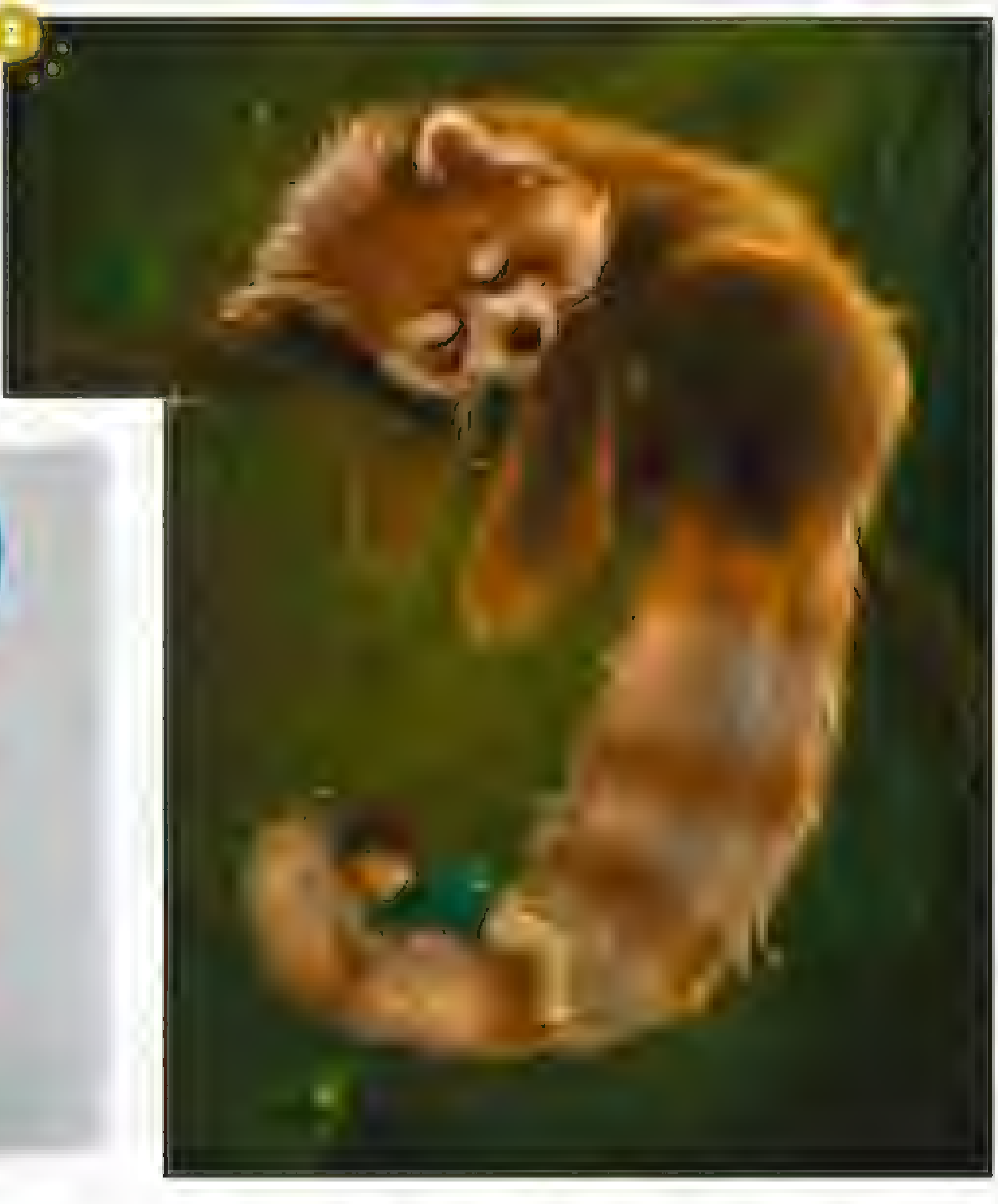
South Africa
http://nightshadeberry.deviantart.com
nightshadeberry@gmail.com
Photoshop

Art has always been a passion for South Africa-based Gabby, yet the 20-year-old digital artist and freelance illustrator only discovered digital art about two years ago, when she was instantly hooked. She counts her influences as nature, music, movies, Pixar animation, anime and manga as well as artists such as Erik Jones, Stanley Lau, HR Giger and Hayao Miyazaki

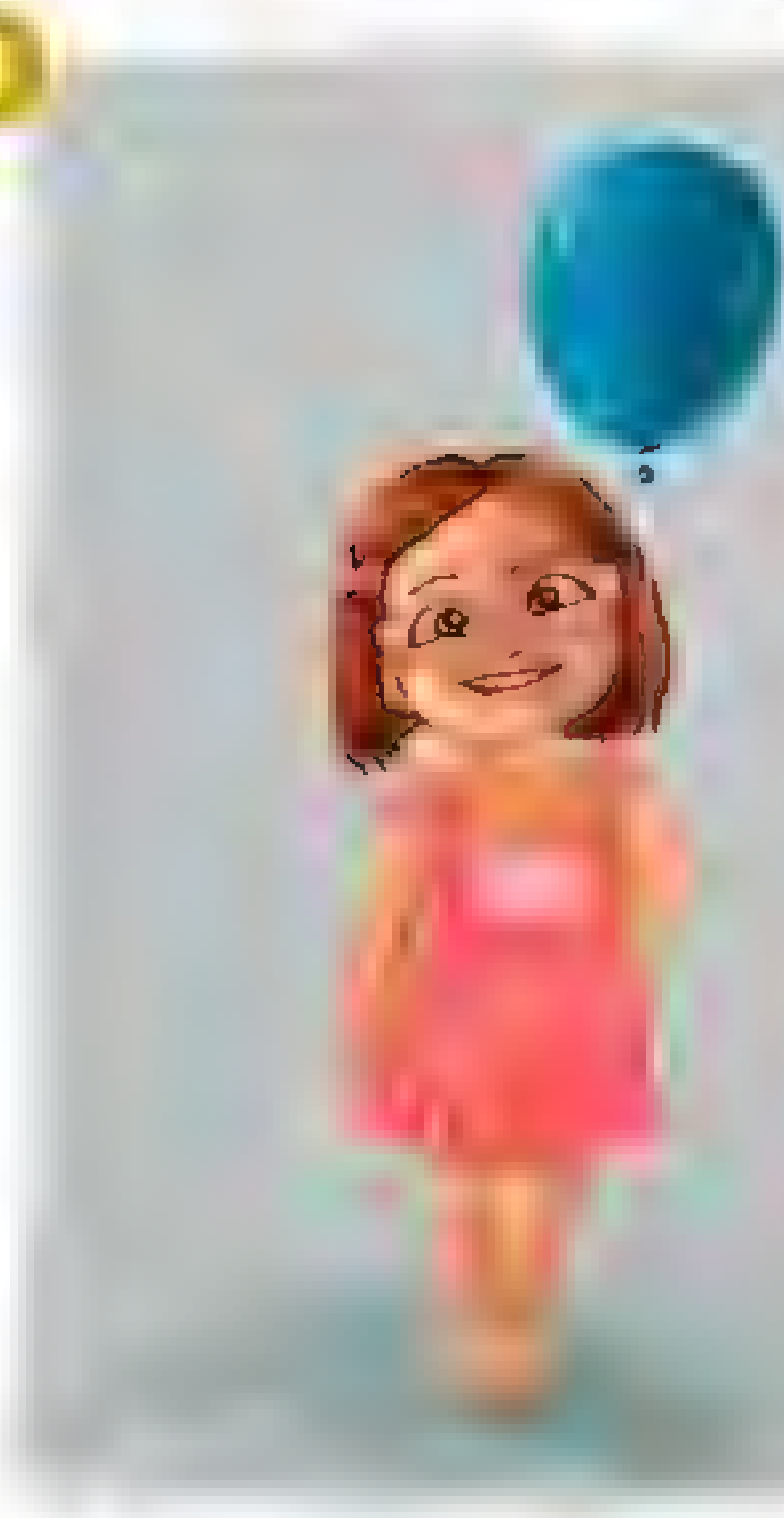
"I look for inspiration everywhere I go and in everything I do. I draw almost every day and take the time to study the art of great digital artists. Taking part in as many art competitions as possible encourages me to push my art to the next level."



FLYING ZEBRA "I wanted to create a dreamy atmosphere with a dynamic composition. I'm showing the wild and vivid imagination of children."



SWEET DREAMS "I like to draw oversized fluffy animals, and in this image I'm showing the relationship children have with animals. It depicts trust and friendship."



KATYA "This character is based on my sister's little daughter, Katya. She's even cuter in real life. I also took inspiration from Pixar's characters."

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Reader FXPosé

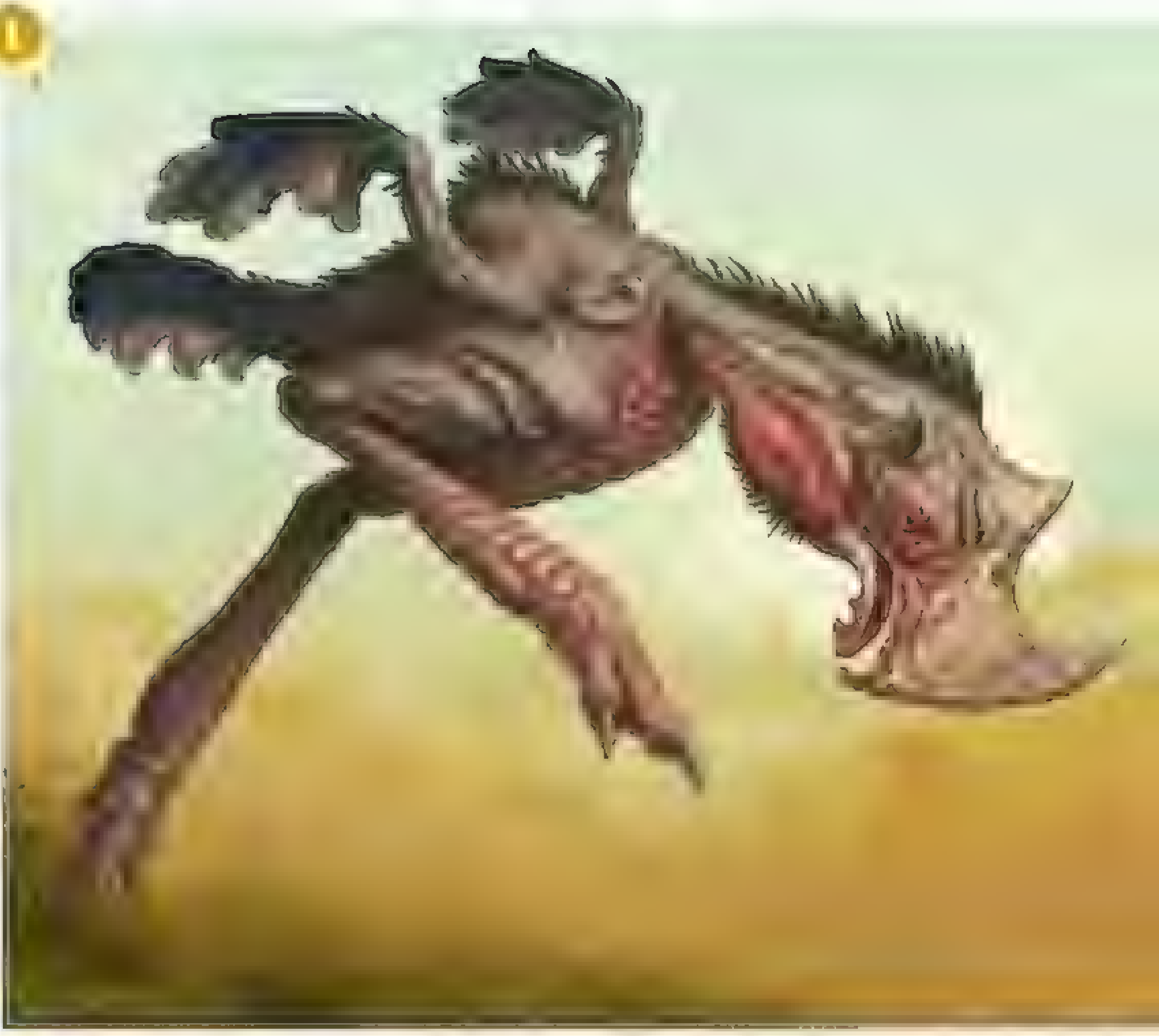
Christopher Burdett

US
www.christopherburdett.com
chris@christopherburdett.com
Photoshop

"I began working professionally as an artist in the TV and film industry designing monster and make-up effects for Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Angel and Firefly," says Christopher, "and I've also worked on a number of low-budget horror and monster movies."

After leaving the film industry, he started working for Wizards of the Coast on the miniature game Dreamblade, which eventually led to Christopher doing design and concept work for Dungeons & Dragons. "I paint for Wizards of the Coast, Paizo Publishing and Fantasy Flight games on books, card games, board games and miniatures," he tells us. "I hope to eventually work on card games like Magic: the Gathering and the WoW card game. Most of all I enjoy working on anything with monsters!" Some things don't change...

1



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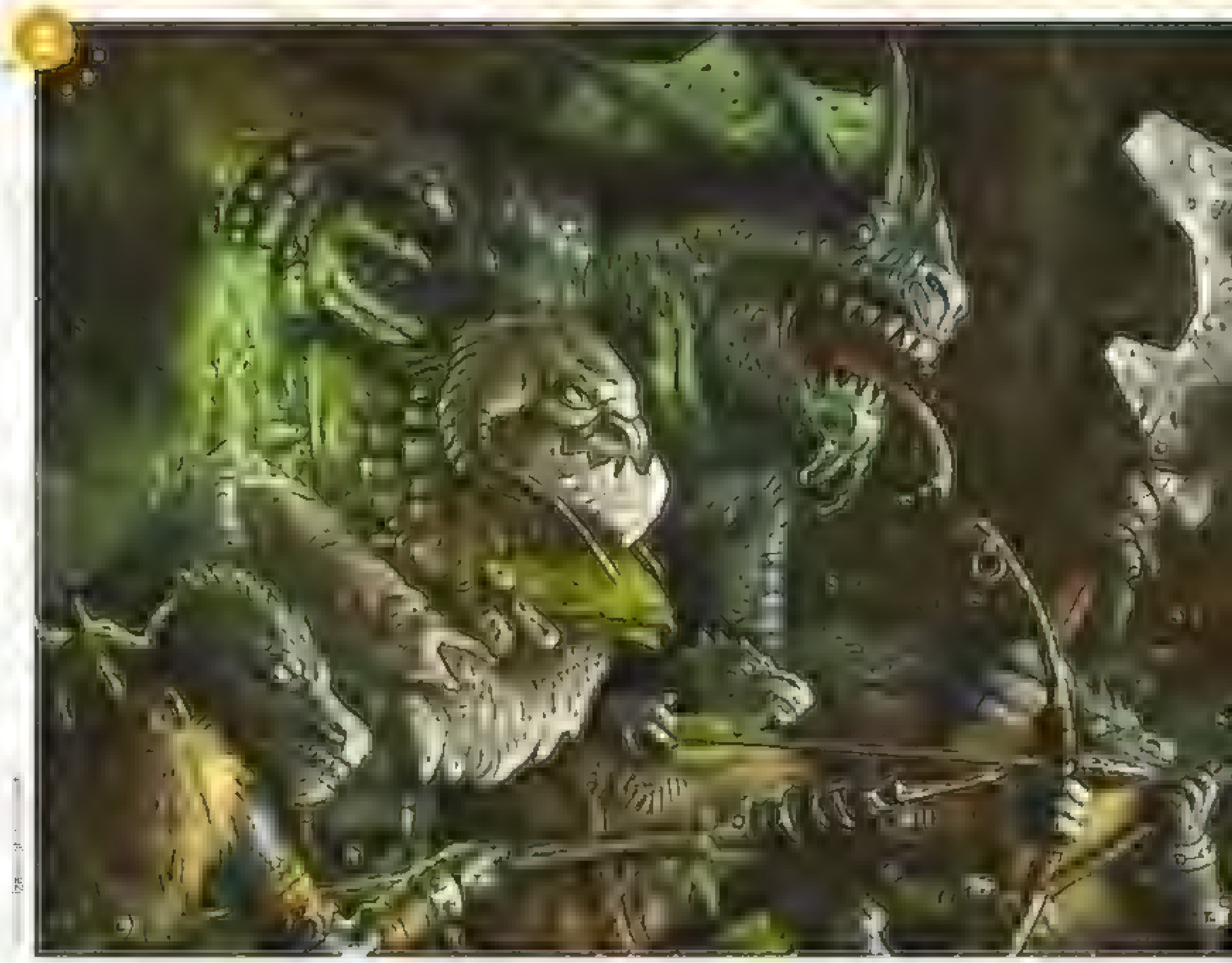
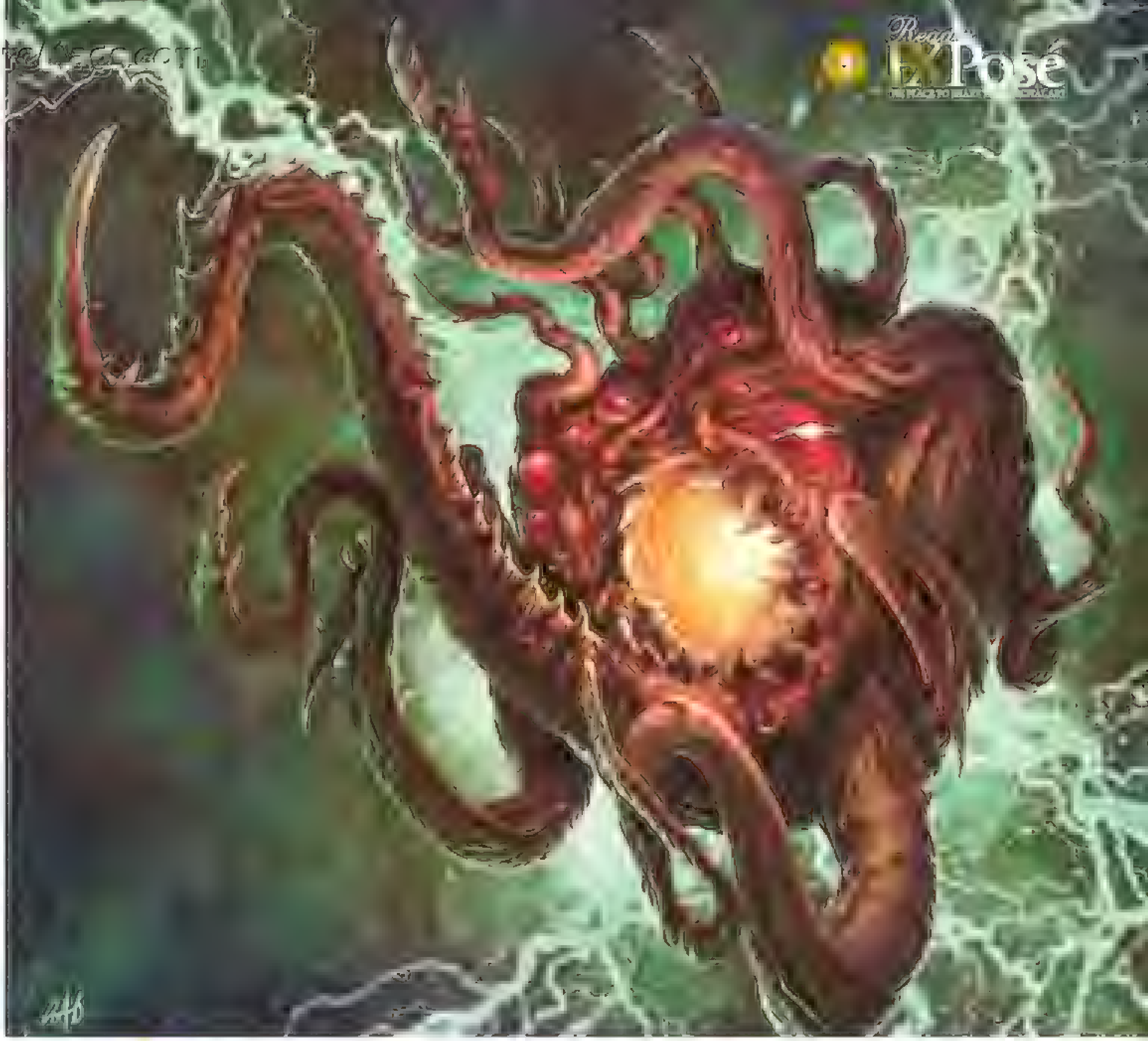


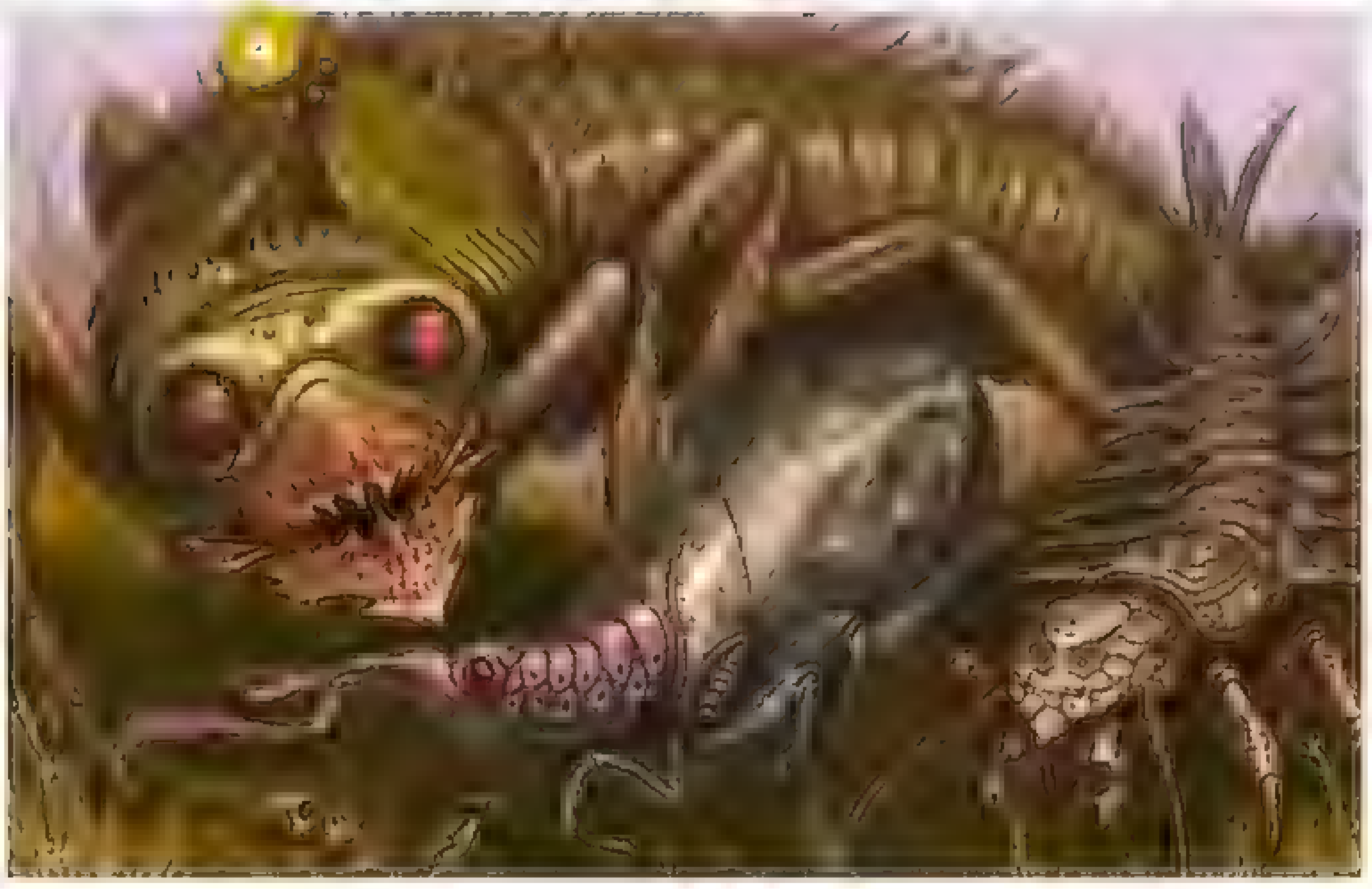
RHINOSTRICH "This is one the three submissions I produced for the ArtOrder 'Mutation Nation Challenge'. They're all special to me in their own ways, but there's just something about this poor dumb mutant that makes this one my favourite."

BACKDROP Q'BARRA "This piece was for Dungeon Magazine, issue 185, and had my name all over it. I love reptile monsters and this has all my favourite evil Dungeons & Dragons lizard monsters: lizardmen, troglodytes and my absolute favourites – kobolds! I redesigned the troglodyte for Fourth Edition D&D and this was my first chance to use one in an illustration."

GREAT OLD ONE "It's hard to go wrong with lots of tentacles, and this critter has plenty. This piece almost never got finished due to other demands on my time. I'm so glad that I eventually had time to get back and finish it up. I also think having a long break in the middle of painting the piece enabled me to do so much more with it."

THEY CREEP BUGS "I was asked to design two sets of all-new insect monsters for Dungeons &Dragons that appeared in issue 191 of Dungeon Magazine. They consisted of a trio of scarabs and a trio of bugs. They suggested some real insects to look at for inspiration and enabled me to have fun making some new monsters."





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Want to see your digital art grace these very pages? Send your work to us, along with an explanation of your techniques, the title of each piece of art, a photo of yourself and your contact details. Images should be sent as 300dpi JPEG files, on CD or DVD. All artwork is submitted on the basis of a non-exclusive worldwide licence to publish, both in print and electronically.

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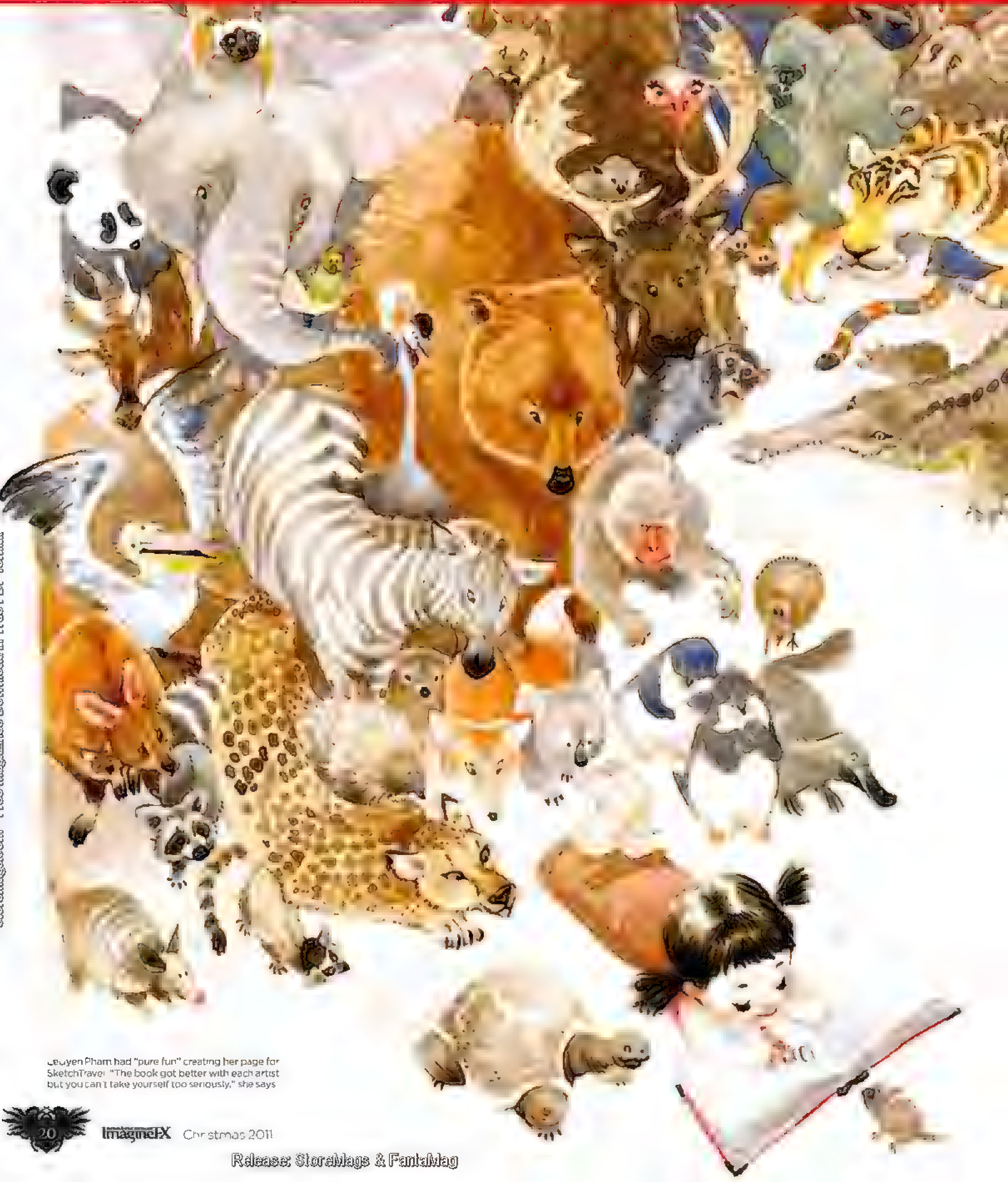


LeUyen Pham had "pure fun" creating her page for SketchTravel. "The book got better with each artist but you can't take yourself too seriously," she says

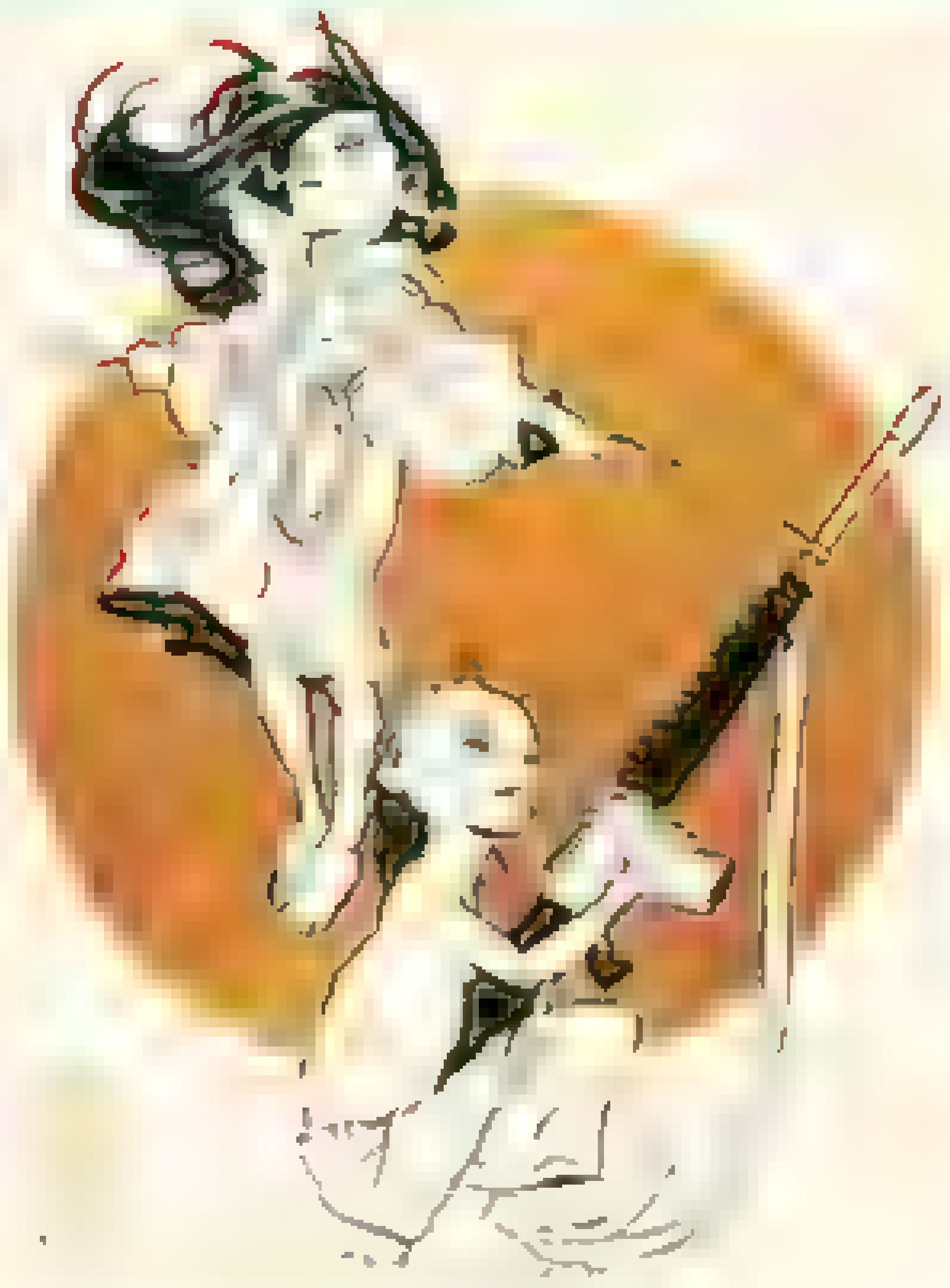
DRESSED TO IMPRESS
Take inspiration from Lunnaya's collection of lush cosplay outfits – including mermaids and princesses – that she models on her deviantART pages.
Page 24

TOP OF THE CLASS
We talk to Kirsten Zirngibl, whose body of student work at The Art Department landed her an internship at Massive Black's Shanghai studio. Go Kirsten!
Page 26

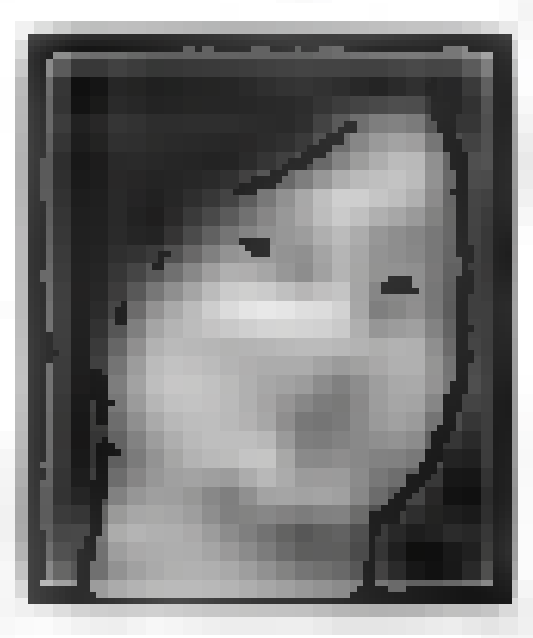
HERE BE MONSTERS
If you've got even the slightest interest in ghastly things that slither, suck and stomp, then Aaron Alfrey's monster-loaded blog is well worth a visit.
Page 28

Art goes full circle

Draw a blank In 2006 Gerald Guerlais and Dice Tsutsumi sent an empty sketchbook around the world. Five years later it came back to them…



The simplest ideas are the best. Take Sketchtravel: an empty sketchbook was sent across the world and filled by 71 of the world's illustrators, comic artists, animators and artists, including Hayao Miyazaki, Frederic Back and Quentin Blake. The book was then auctioned, duplicates published and signing days organised around the world, with all proceeds going to the child literacy charity Room to Read. Simple!



Yet behind Pixar art director Daisuke "Dice" Tsutsumi and French illustrator Gerald Guerlais's uncomplicated idea lies years of preparation, countless hours spent spreading the word and sustaining momentum, and a great deal of ingenuity and passion, as Gerald puts it. "We were motivated to work with a diverse range of artists in 12 different countries and to support a charity that could make a real difference. After five years, the result is worth all our efforts."

The book is also a unique document of the creative process of making your mark – or sketch – count within the global community. Flowing through the book, the anxiety involved is often referenced by the artists, but in a variety of ways. "The book was passed in person, from artist to artist, country to country," says Peter de Sève.

"I was terrified to commit anything to the page and this got worse and worse each time the book came to me. There were also no rules as to what the artists could do. That made it even more difficult," he says. "I think my drawing, if nothing else, conveys my anxiety."

For Peter Nguyen, the pass-around sketchbook [illegible] came to the rescue. "I followed the skull or skeleton theme set out by Mike Mignola's art," he says. "Although there were no rules and no deadlines as such, I only had a couple of hours to do it from start to finish." Using his love for deep-sea divers' suits and Mike's skeleton, his dead deep-sea diver was the result.

Ironically, this weird combination of no rules and artistic competition worked to

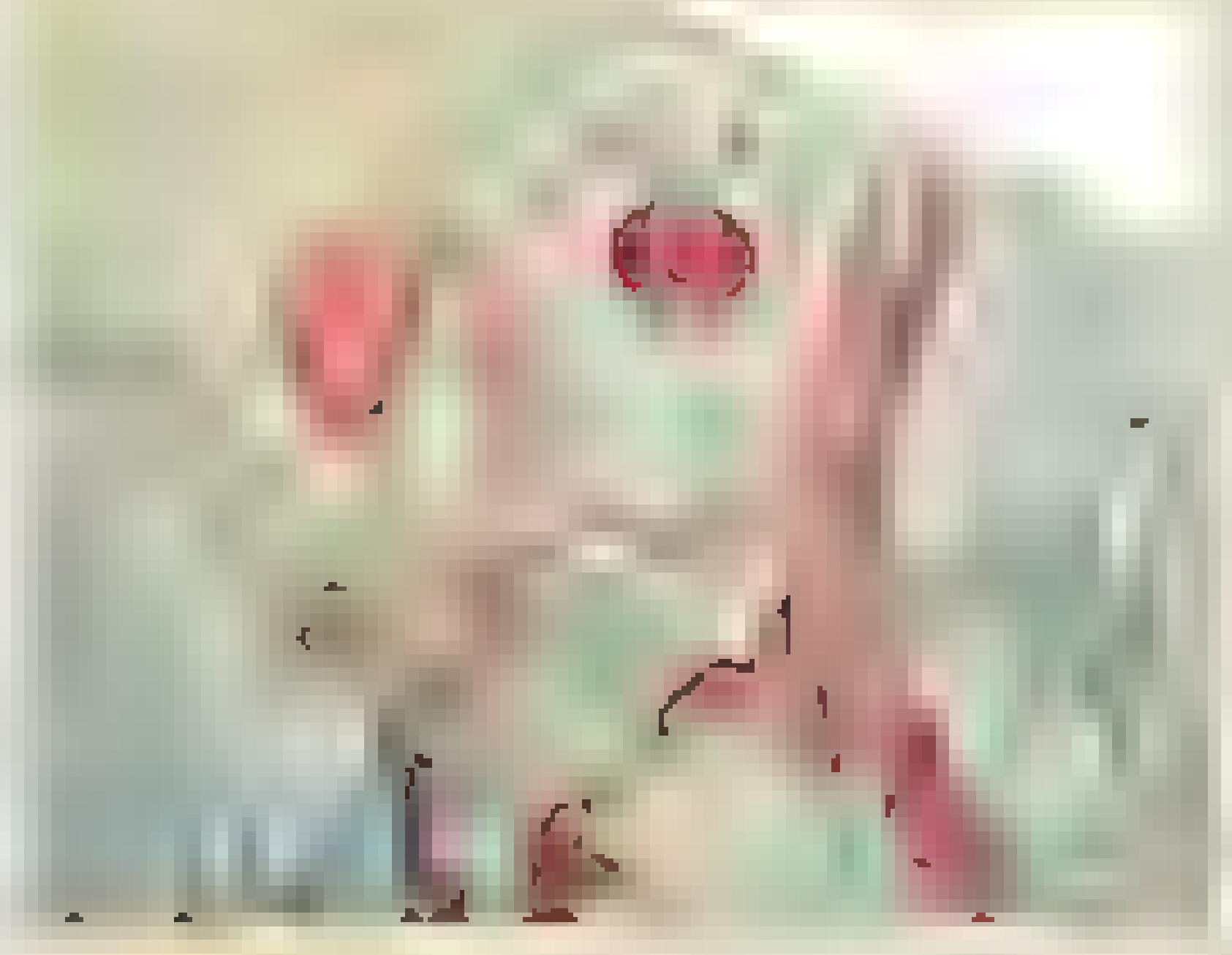
> I was terrified to commit anything to the page and this got worse and worse each time the book came to me

Book illustrator Tomer Hanuka, above, got involved in the project summer 2009.

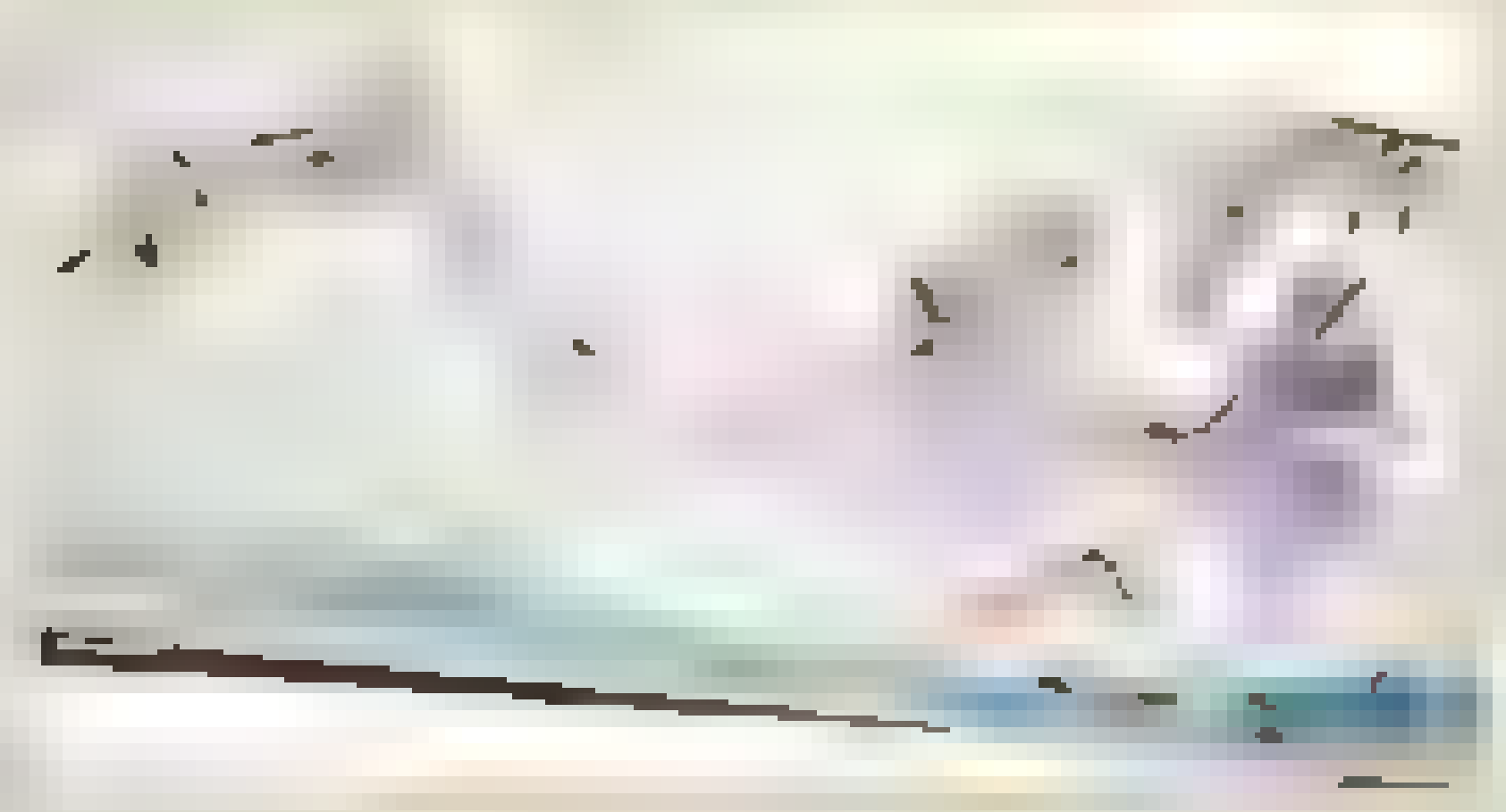
When US artist Erik Tiemens got his chance he prepared a digital sketch of this windmill scene in Painter before committing watercolour and gouache to page

SKETCHTRAVEL TIMELINE

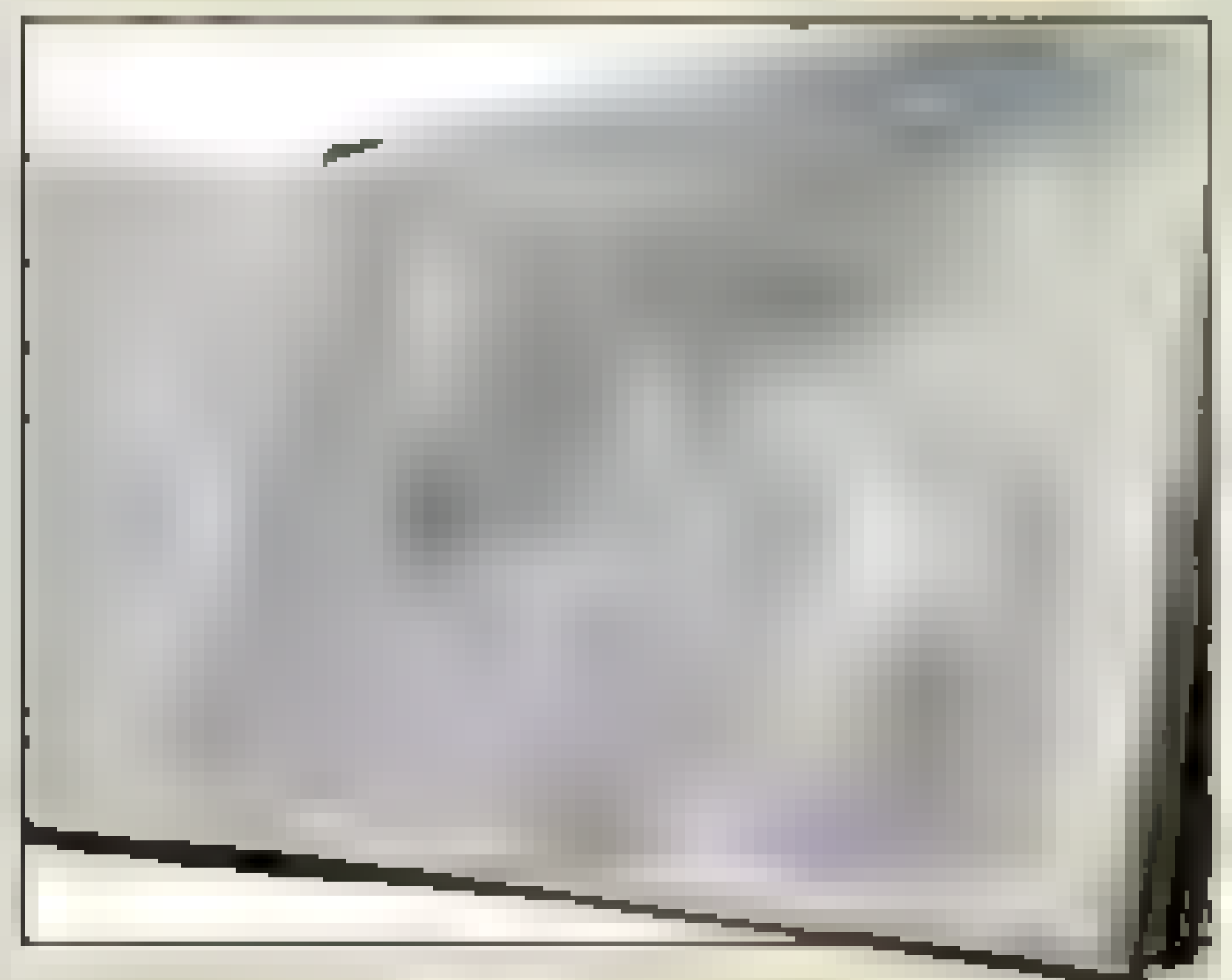
Here's just a snippet of the art that features in the book…



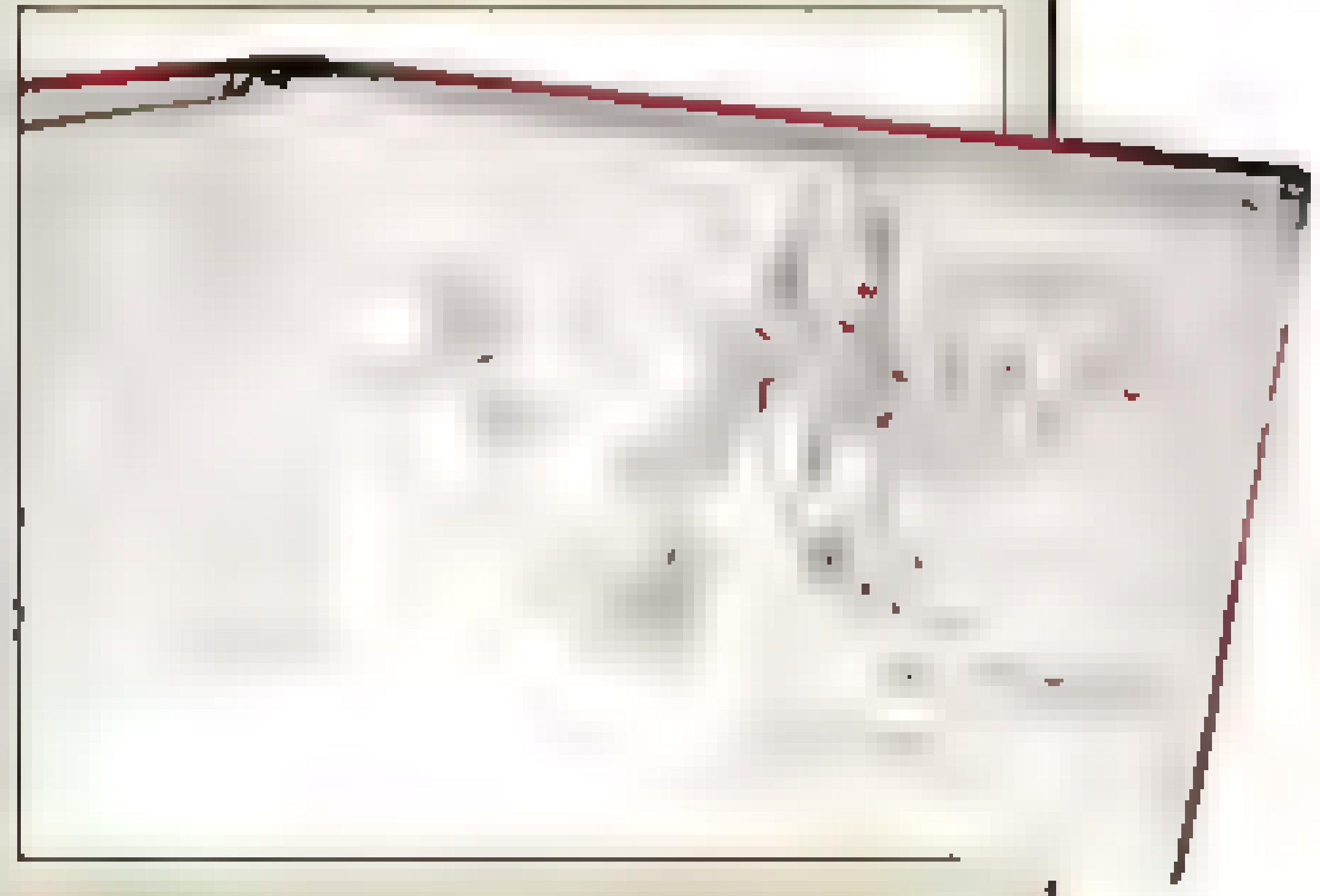
James Jean, Los Angeles, February 2008



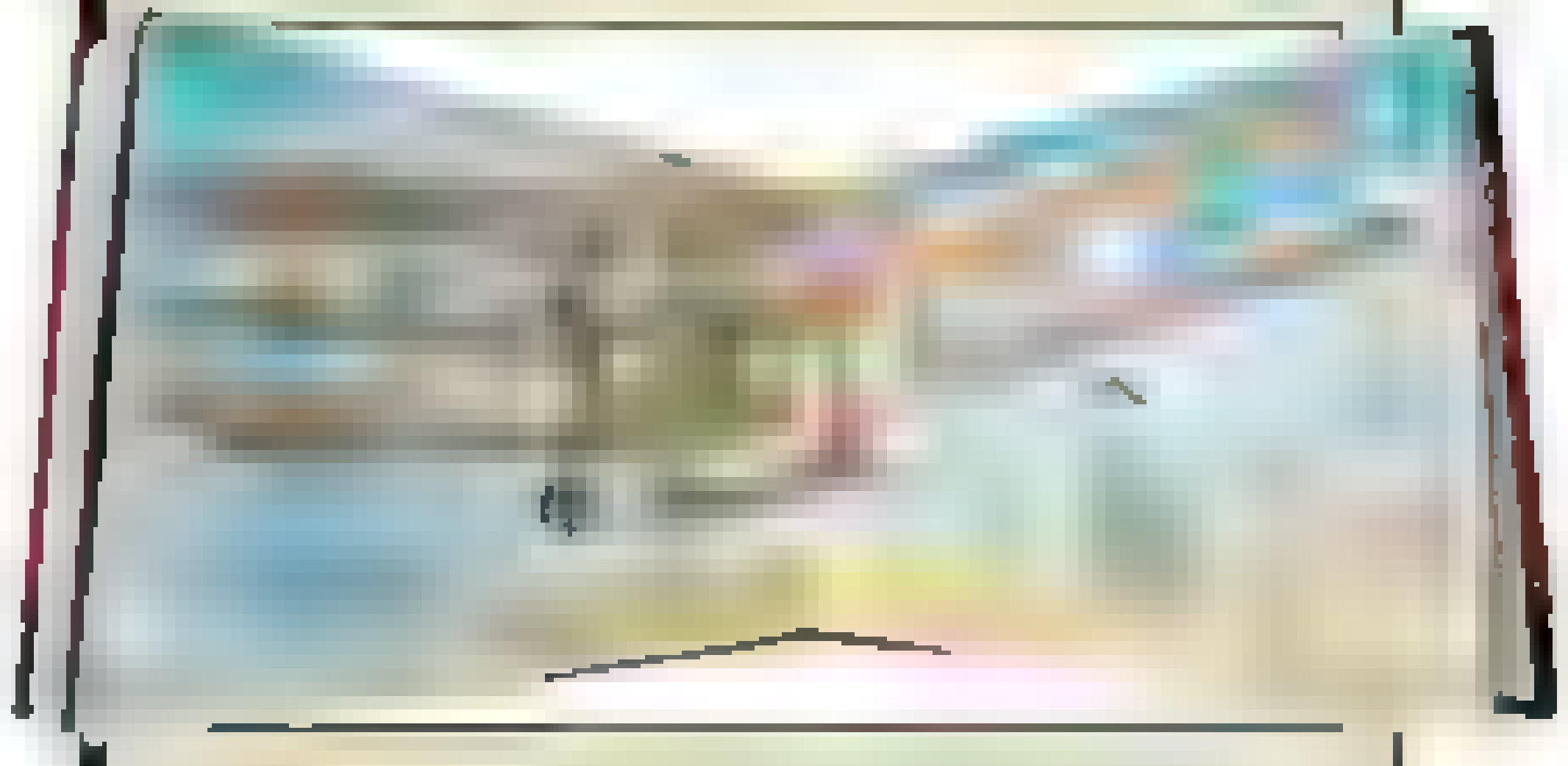
Quentin Blake, London, 3 November 2008



John Howe, Switzerland, 10 November 2008

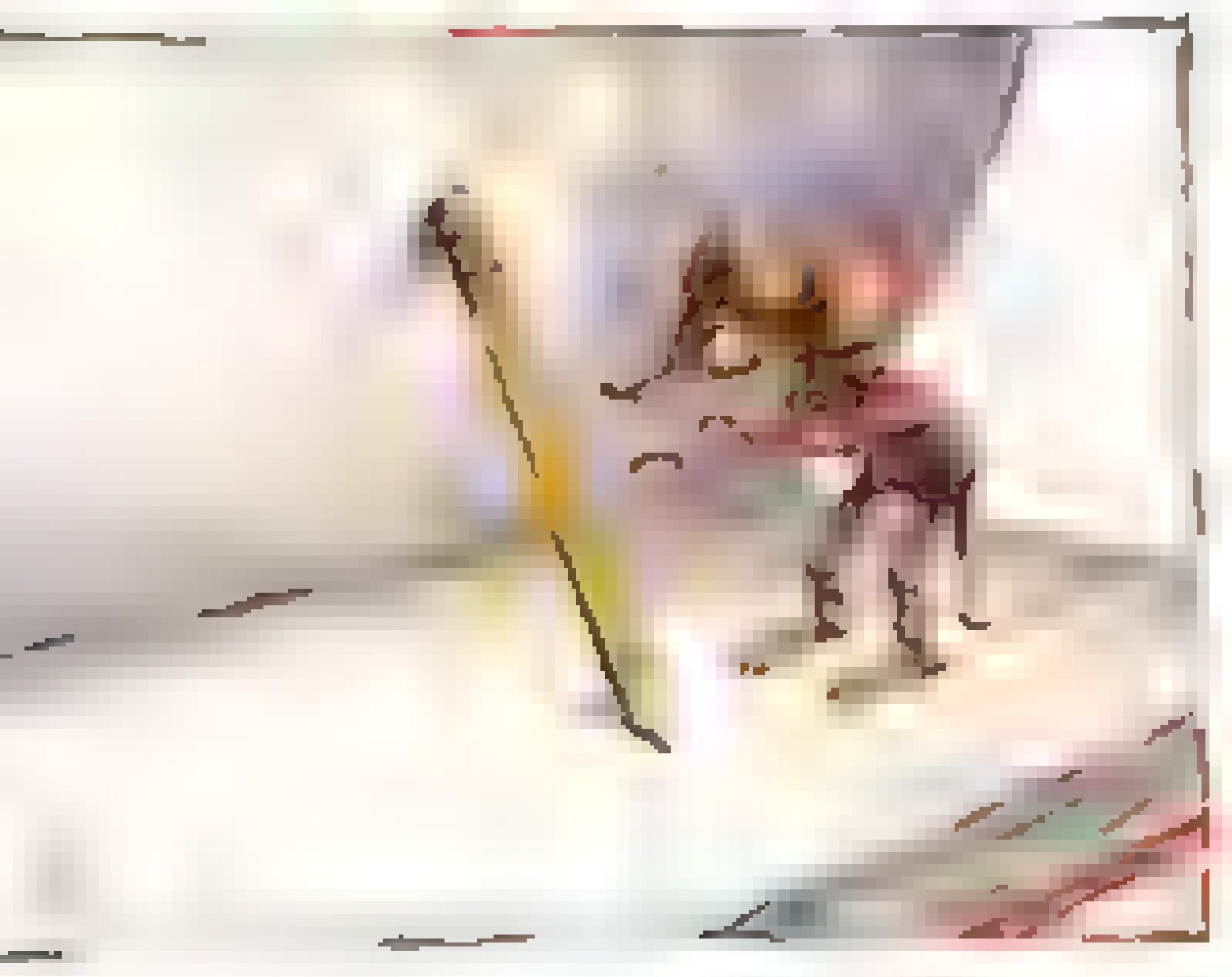


Katsuya Terada, Tokyo, 1 November 2009



Hayao Miyazaki, Tokyo, 28 January 2011

Continued from previous page...



Ice Age artist Peter de Sève's sketch conveys anxiety in making his mark

Illustrator LeUyen Pham's advantage: "I'm generally a nervous artist and I was

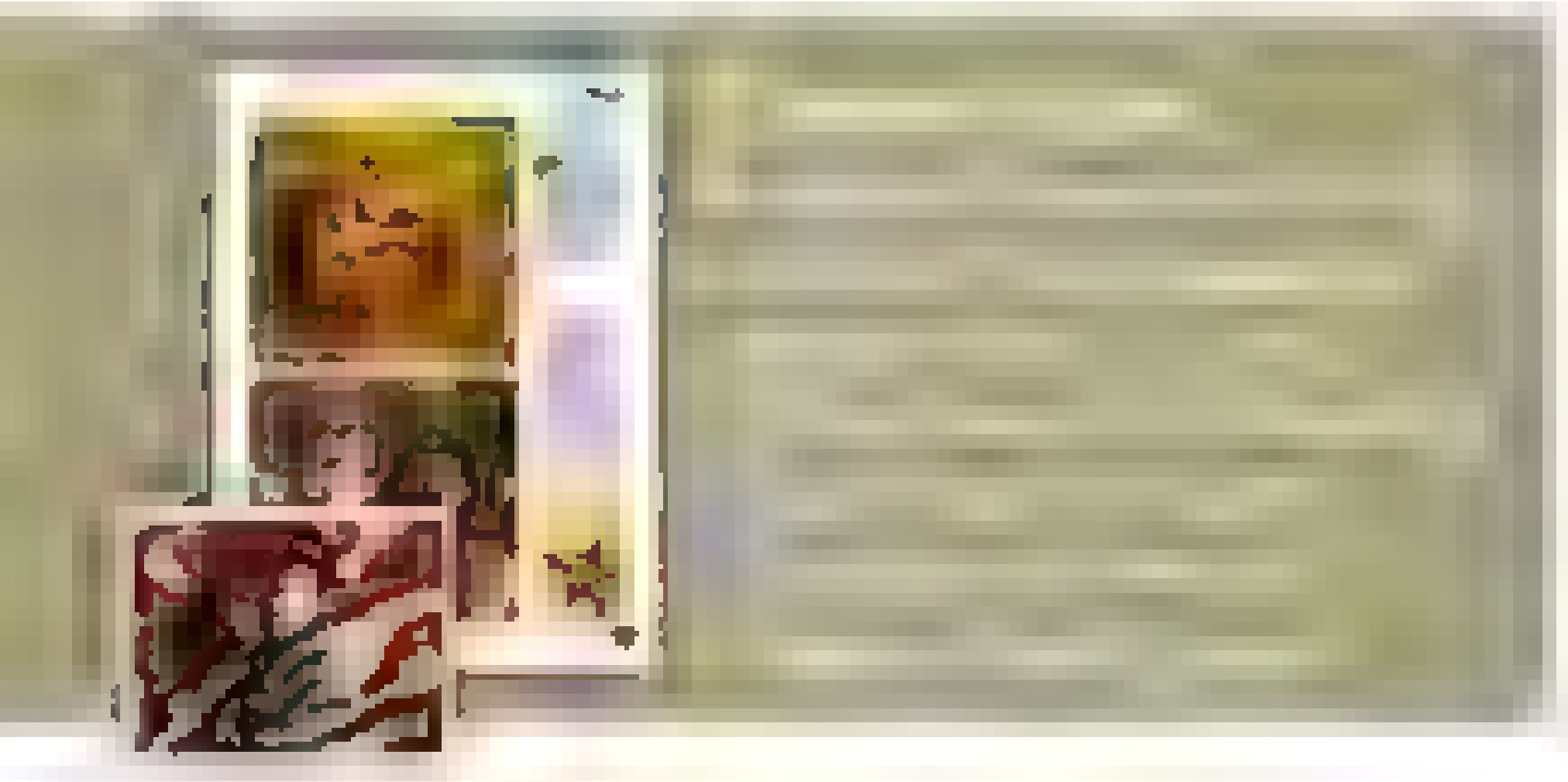
crunched between two book illustration deadlines, so I decided to draw for the pure sake of fun," she says, "something that I hadn't done for a while." LeUyen started her piece late in the evening and worked through until five in the morning. "When I look at it I feel the energy behind it, and it reminds me of why I wanted to become an artist in the first place."

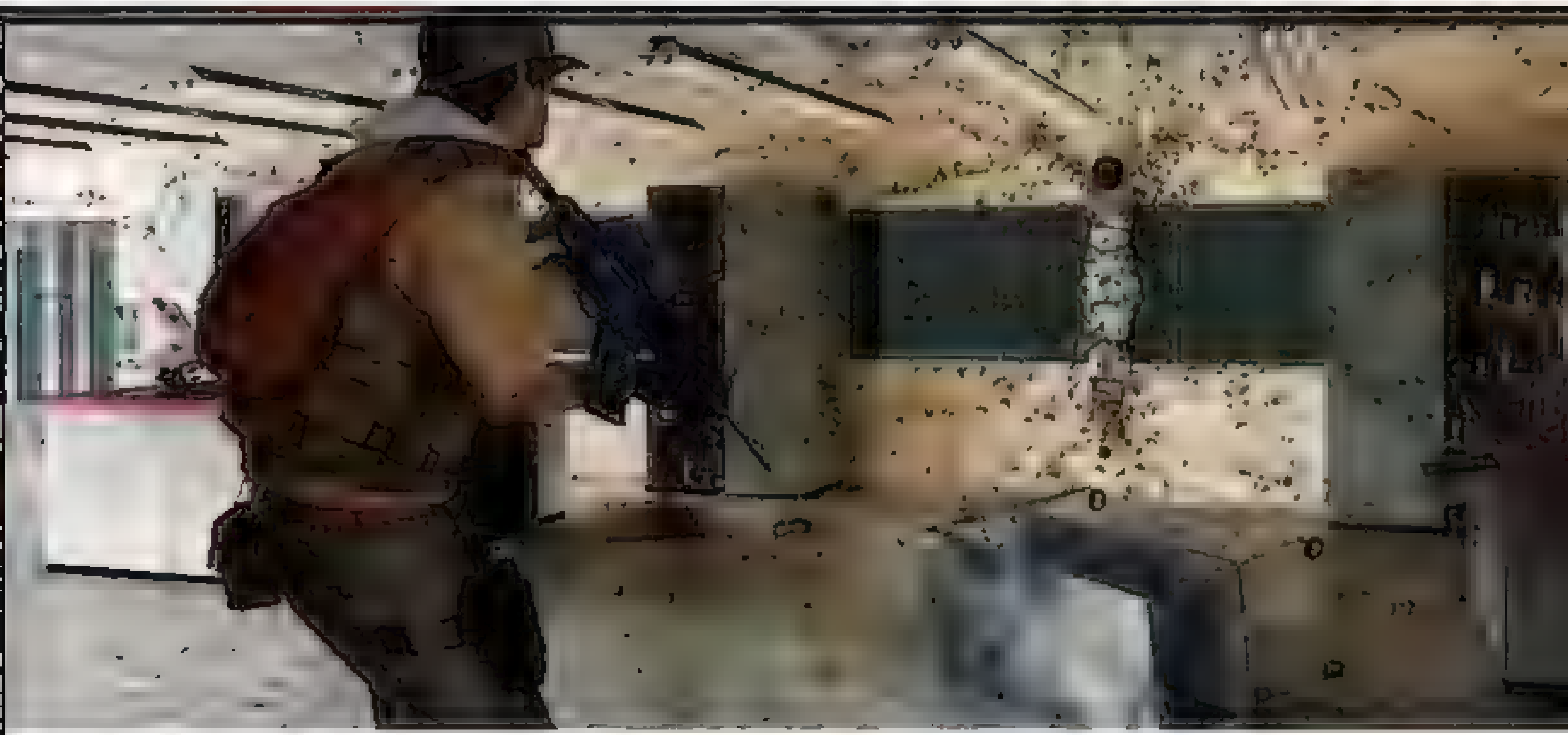
The fact the project had the potential to make a real change in children's lives was important for many artists. Selected by a contributing artists, Room to Read supports child literacy and gender equality in developing countries through building libraries and training local artists and writers to create children's books.

"Our goal is to raise $3[illegible]000 to build one library and sponsor one children's book publishing in Laos, expanding as funding

allows," says organiser Gerald [illegible]. "Education and access to free information are the basis for a strong society, so I think that all the artists' fantastic little sketches have done some good."

See more of the sketches here: **www.sketchtravel.com**





This version of Sleeping Beauty by Johannes Voss is reimagining in action – and then some!

Happy endings

Fresh perspective After a lot of to-ing and fro-ing, Bobby Chui's CGHub Fairy Tales Re-Imagined competition has finally announced the winners

If you got your hands on issue 70 of ImagineFX, you'd have read about Bobby Chiu's CGHub competition to reimagine fairy tales, with fantastic prizes up for grabs including Bobby Chiu artwork, software and an ImagineFX subscription.

Bobby offered some insightful advice to would-be entrants and two artists that must have been paying attention were Johannes Voss and Michor Lu, the 2D and 3D winners, respectively. "I liked how open to interpretation it was," says Johannes. "Lots of contests tell you pretty much what to do, but with this one you could just go wild."

Johannes's take on Sleeping Beauty did more than win him first place. "It's always troubling to have an idea and end up with something different," he says, "but it seems in this case it worked out. I also learned a few things during the process about how to plan out larger images so that's always the most rewarding thing to get out of an image – doing the next one and noticing: 'Hey, this is getting slightly easier.'"

You can see all the finalists here **http://bit.ly/cghubcomp**

Universal success

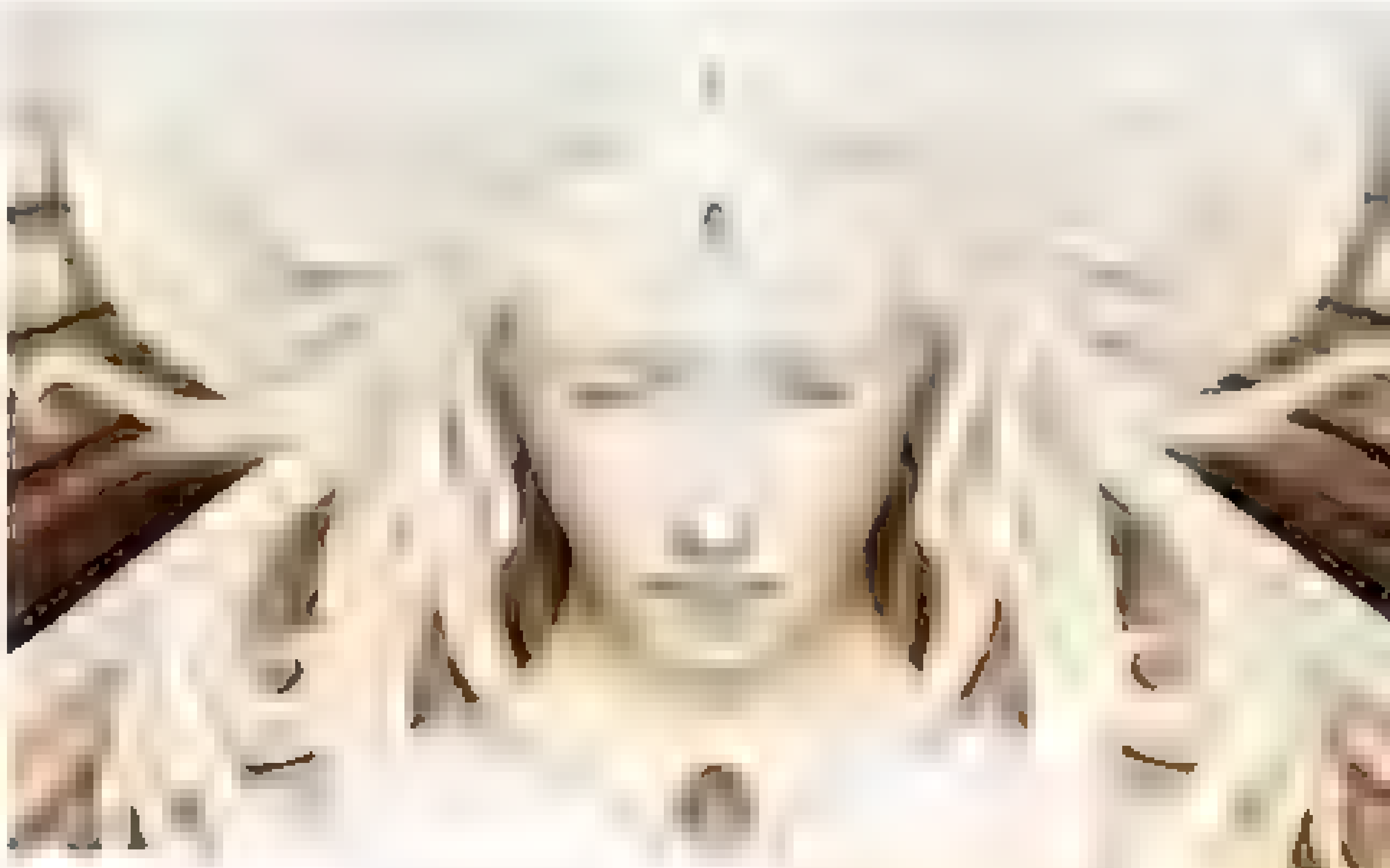
Card art This long-term project has seen hundreds of pieces of miniature art pass through its ranks

Delvin Solkinson has a definite vision for the Galactik Trading Cards project, which is in its 11th year. "I want to share the sacred work of artists covering all seven continents, to create a vehicle for celebrating the uniqueness of many masters and maestras, while revealing the synchronous similitudes that weave them all together into a unified planetary arts culture."

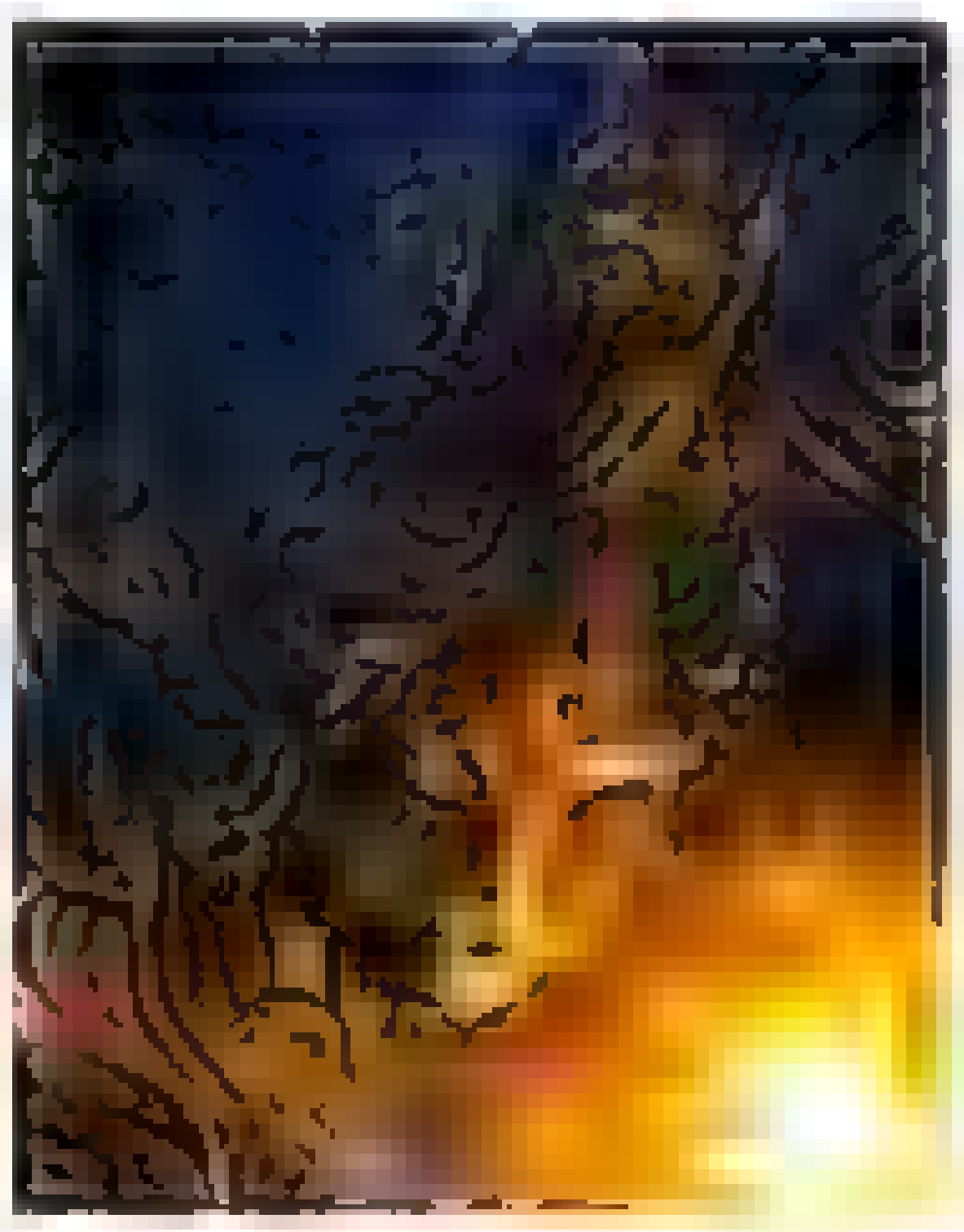
Around 100 artists have contributed original artwork to [illegible] this unique trading card collection, which loosely resemble tarot cards in form and function. Delvin explains: "We've created limited-edition cards that are mailed out to arts organisations, galleries, collectors and aficionados the world over, helping to promote the ongoing project and artwork in places where it wouldn't otherwise be seen."

The project has humble roots, with Delvin accepting hand-written photocopied cards featuring young local artists, to the high-quality prints of pro artists such as Android Jones.

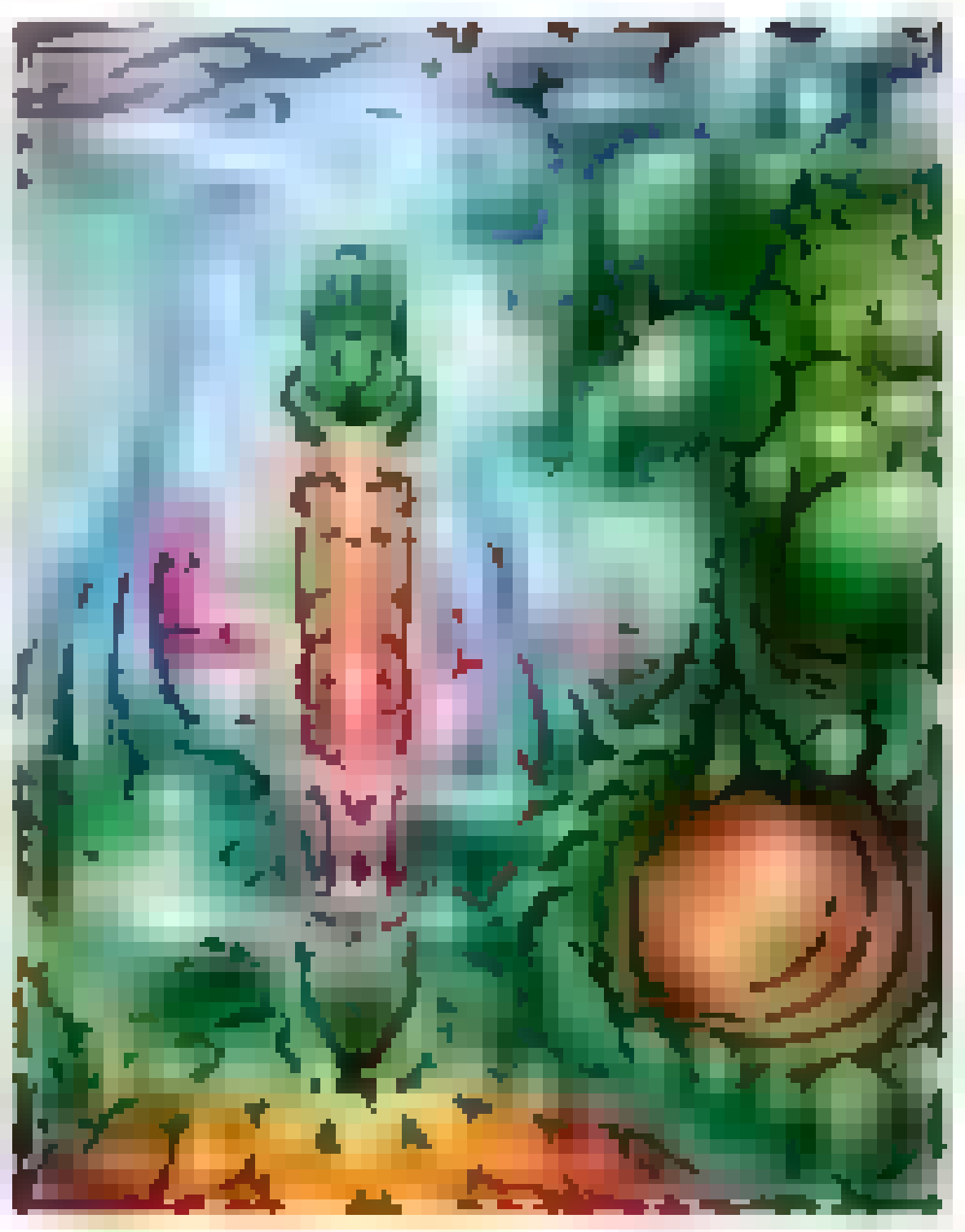
To see and order individual cards and complete sets, visit **www.elvism.squarespace.com/cards**



Texas artist A. Andrew Gonzalez contributed this ethereal pale figure to the ongoing project



Luke Brown brought an anthropomorphic feel to his card



The artist known as Xavi created a totem of colour and energy

Space madness

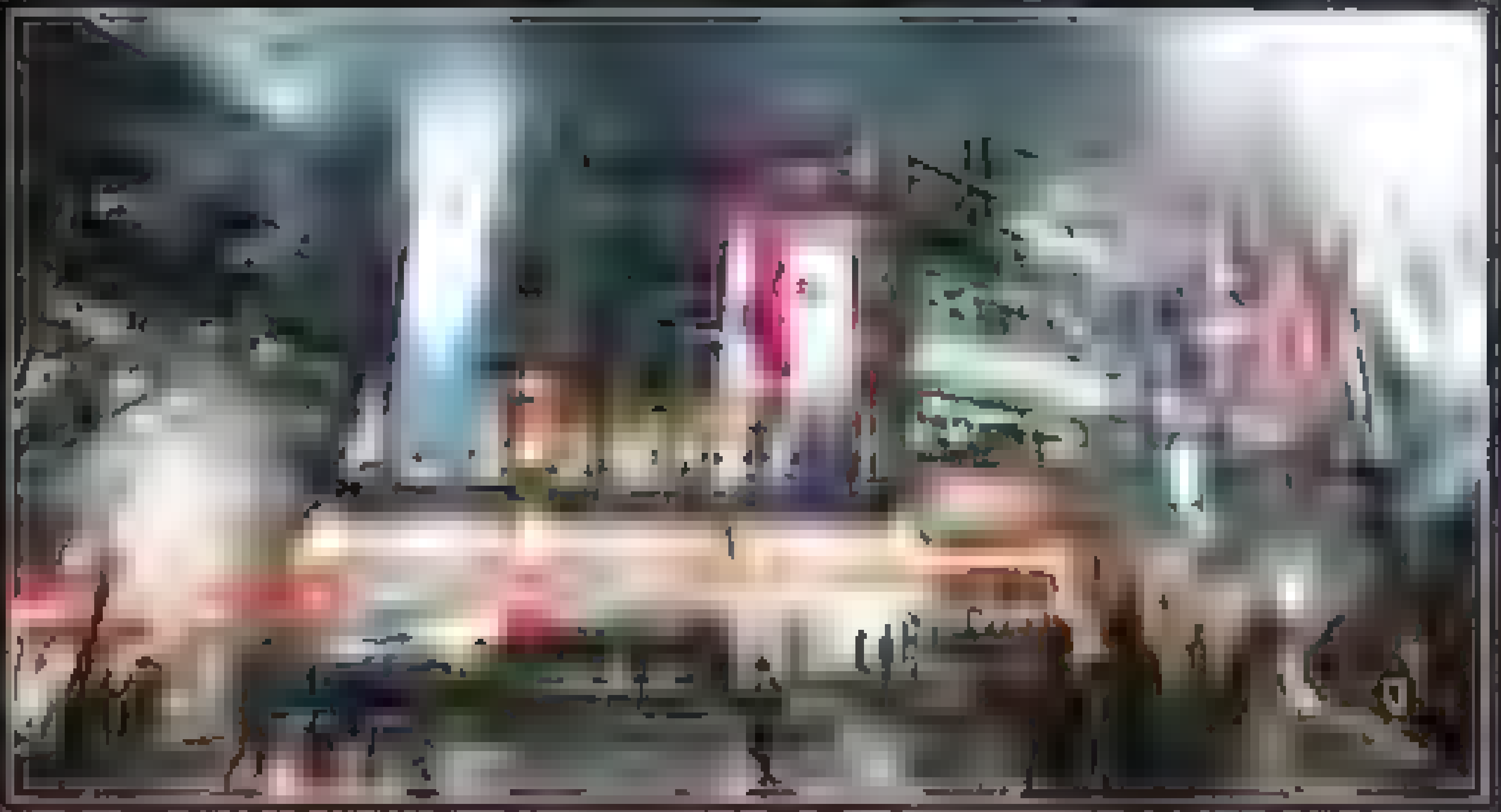
[illegible] After working on it for four years, French studio DONTNOD is nearly ready to show off its flagship games title

Since his new games studio DONTNOD opened in 2008, the French artist Aleksi Briclot has been feverishly working on a project that carries the working title Adrift. And it hasn't just been him: in fact, the entire 70-strong team, including co-art director Michel Koch, has put in time to make their flagship game, scheduled for release in autumn 2012, something special.

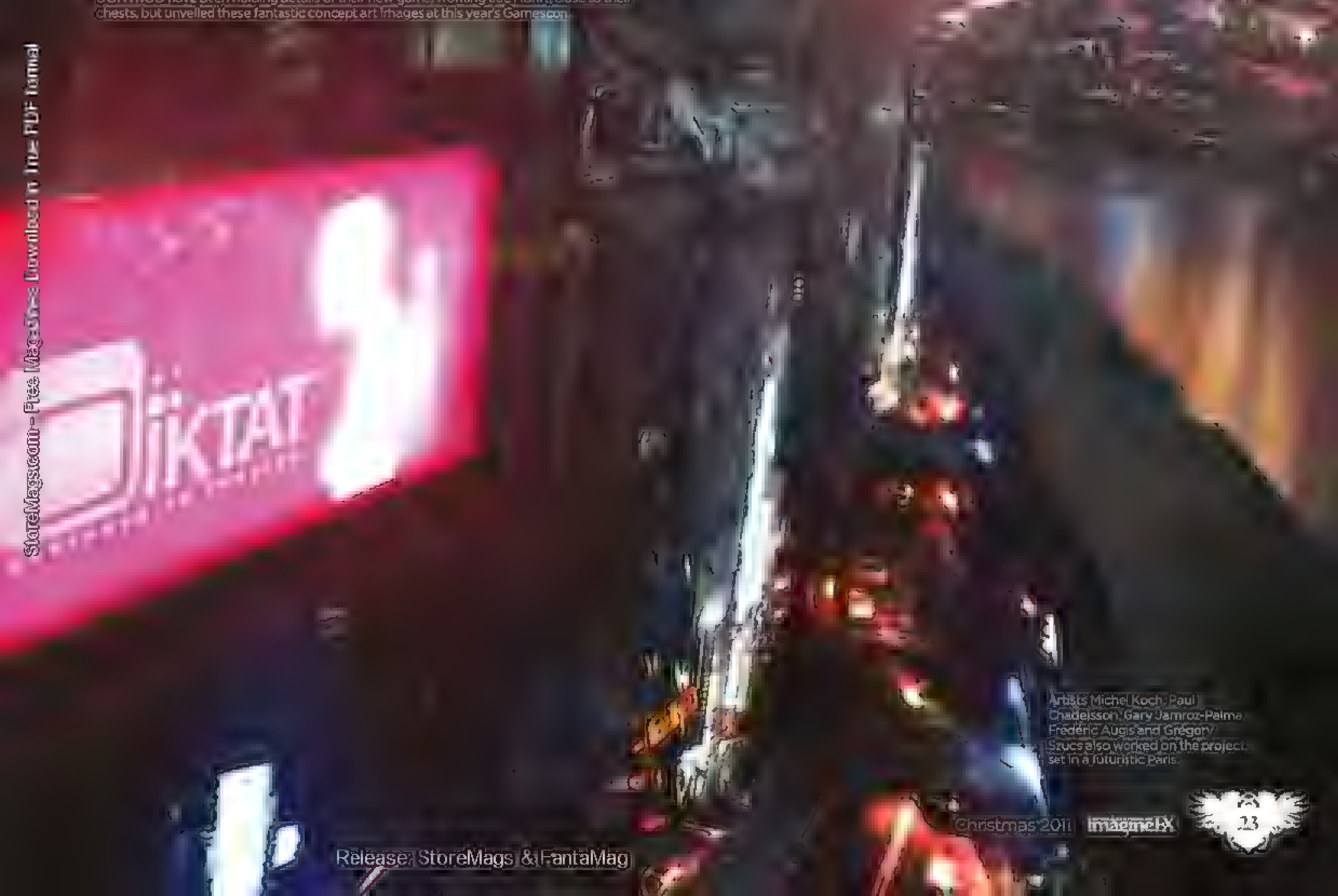
And yet there are elements that the team kept familiar. Set in 'Neo-Paris' in 2084, the game's visuals work on the existing Paris skyline, but infuse it with the artists' futuristic imaginings. [illegible] in a time when [illegible] lives," explains Aleksi. "You [illegible] personal memor[illegible] of [illegible] have been swep[illegible]

In what appears to be a [illegible] pervasiveness of social media [illegible] foremost an action-based [illegible] the right balance," he says. [illegible] the whole team has been [illegible]

Keep an eye out for the [illegible] more artwork here: www.dont-nod[illegible]



DONTNOD have been holding details of their new game, working title Adrift, close to their chests, but unveiled these fantastic concept art images at this year's Gamescom.

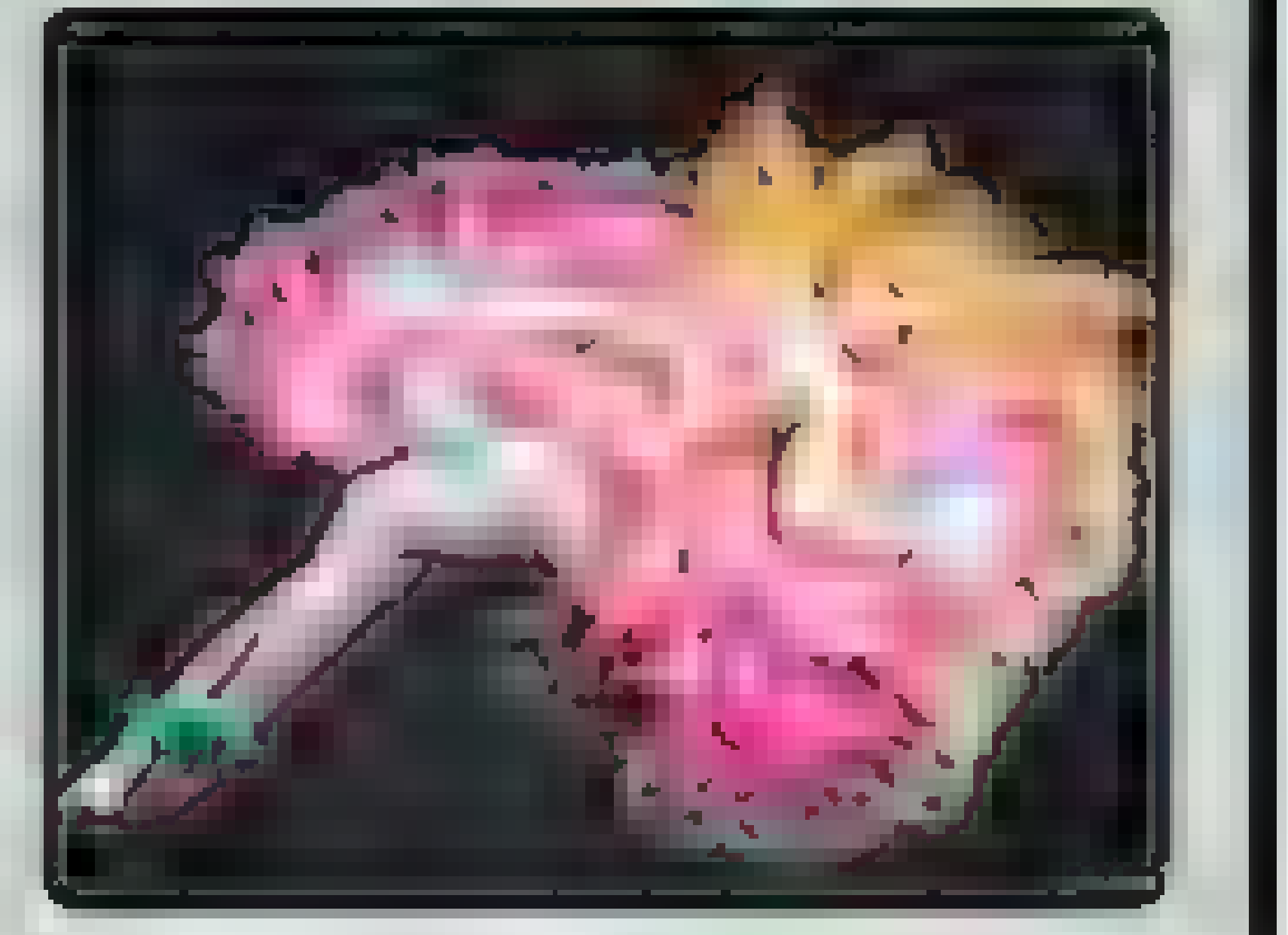


Artists Michel Koch, Paul Chadeisson, Gary Jamroz-Palma, Frédéric Augis and Grégory Szucs also worked on the project, set in a futuristic Paris.

deviantART

+deviantWATCH

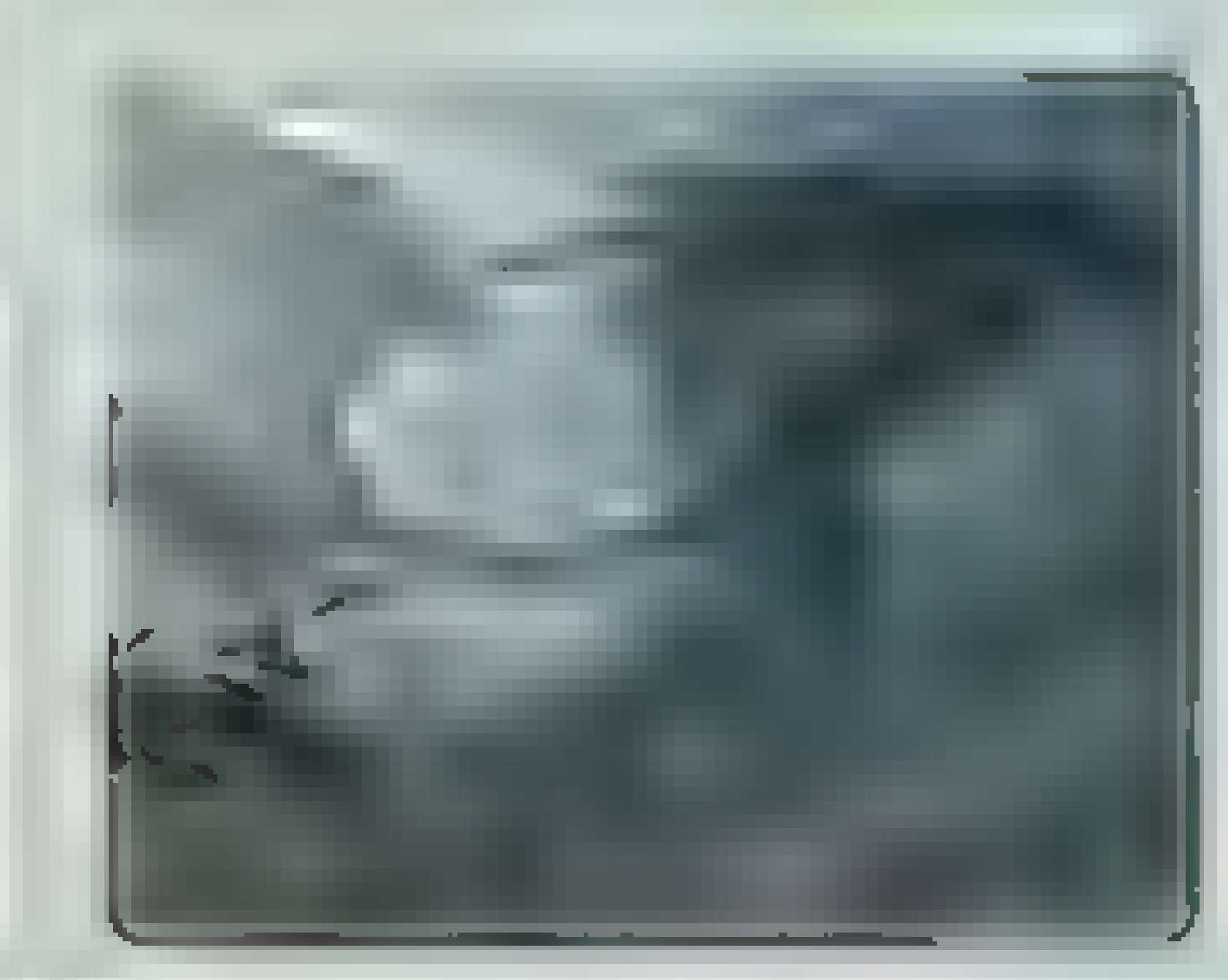
Here are some of the many gems we found on the pages of deviantART...



Lunnaya Nadeja

www.usagi-tsukino-krv.deviantart.com

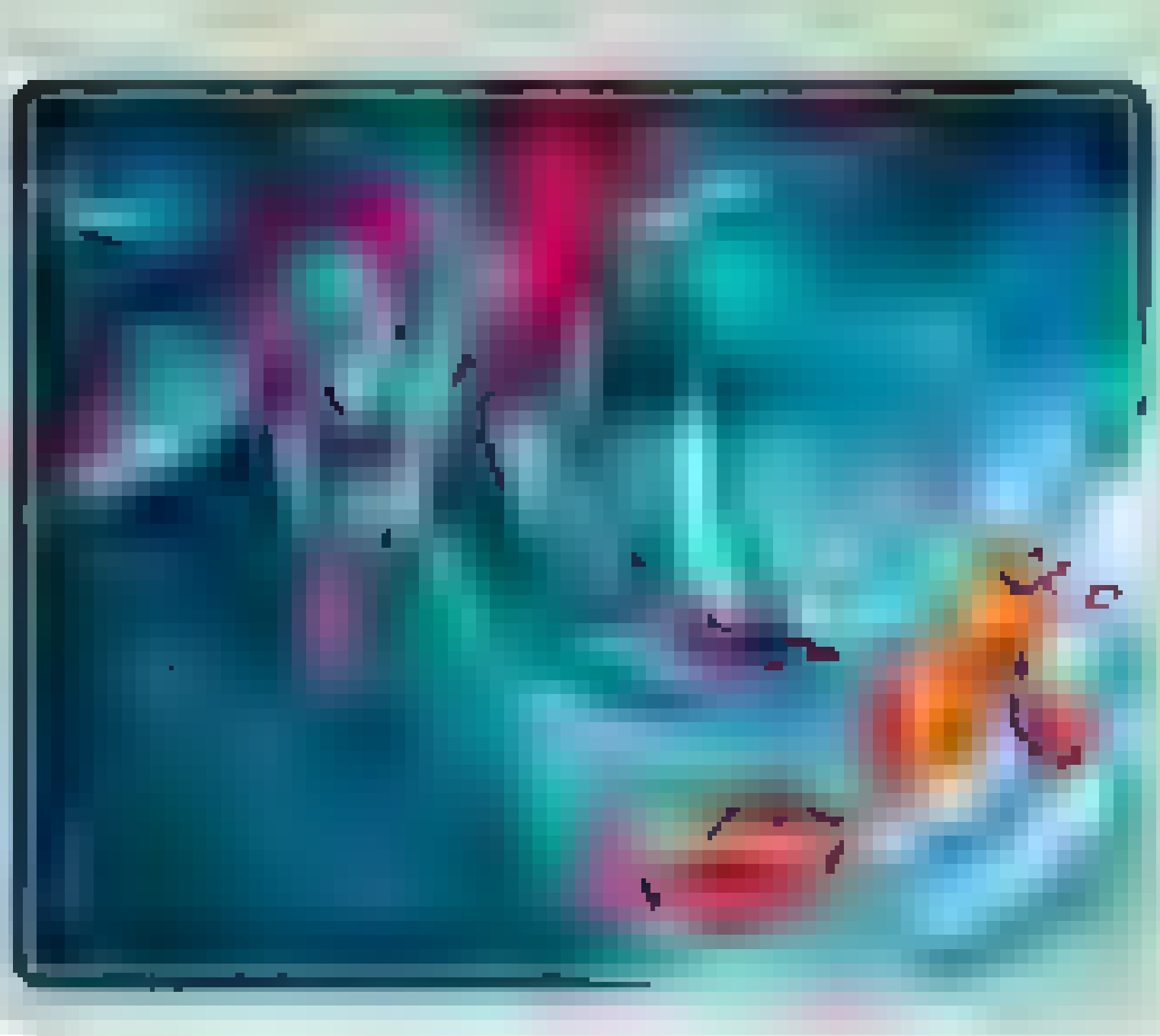
Regardless of your view on cosplay, it can be a great source of inspiration. Model Lunnaya has collected an impressive vault of photos of herself and her friends dressed as manga characters, mermaids and more. Great for playful reference material.



Sandara

www.sandara.deviantart.com

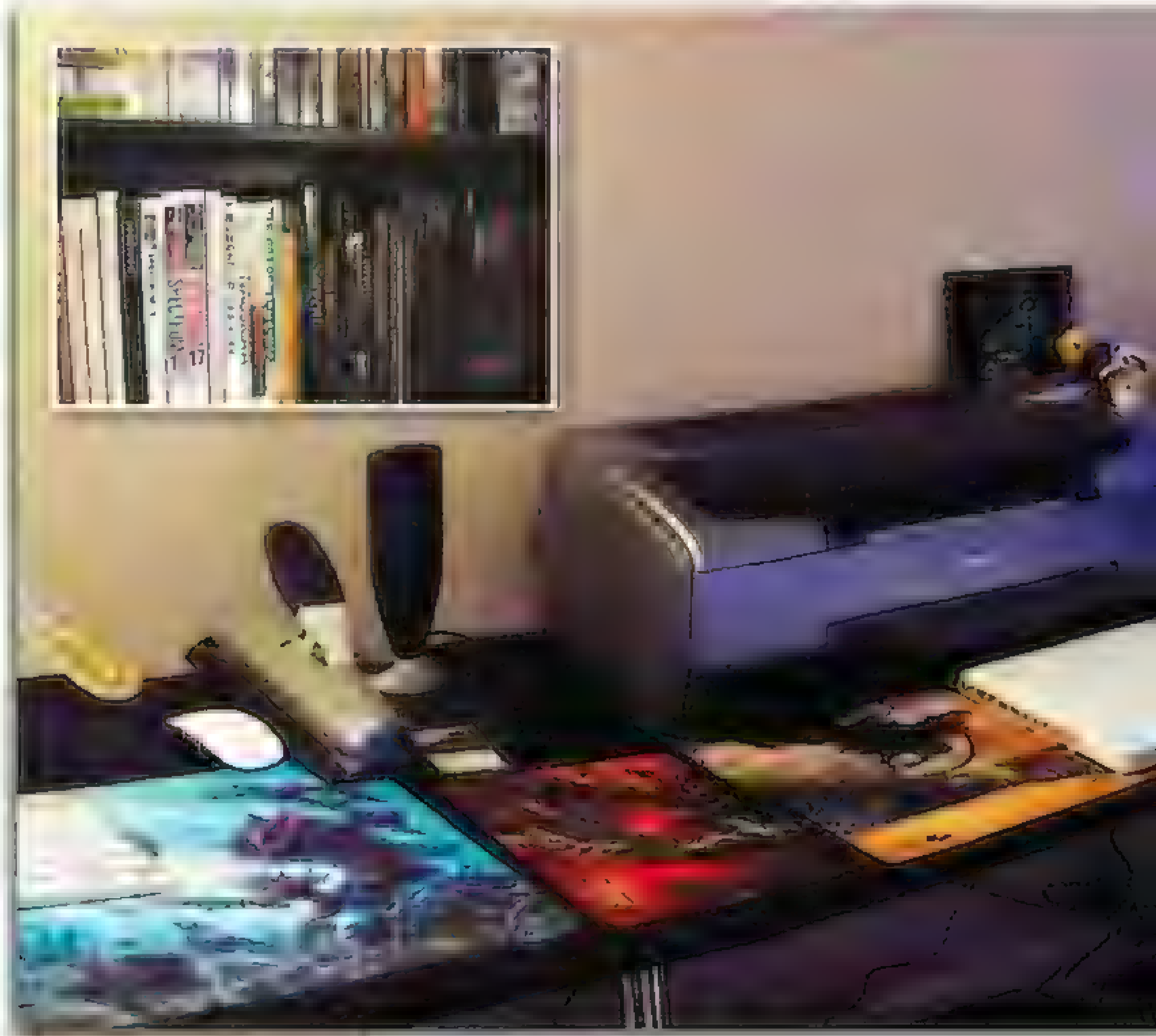
Dragons sharing the skies with US fighter jets, and skeletal-armoured baby warriors – this Singaporean artist is certainly imaginative. She's also has great technical skill and a flair for dramatic lighting. It's also nice to see a few lighter pieces that suggest an artist with range as well as chops.



Tiffany Turrill

www.lieserl.deviantart.com

Tiffany lives in San Francisco but her art comes from another world entirely. Wondrous creatures and mythological characters fight for attention in her gallery. The highlight is her recent work for illustrated book The Journey of the Noble Gnarble, playful underwater pieces full of action.



Here are just a few of my many art books and video games. My collection goes well beyond what you see here – it manages to fill another room entirely!

That's called Chibi Bloodghast. It's a painting my wife made for me

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Daarken

Spelunking It may be dark and dank, but Mike 'Daarken' Lim's work cave is neat and orderly – all the better to show off his tech setup!

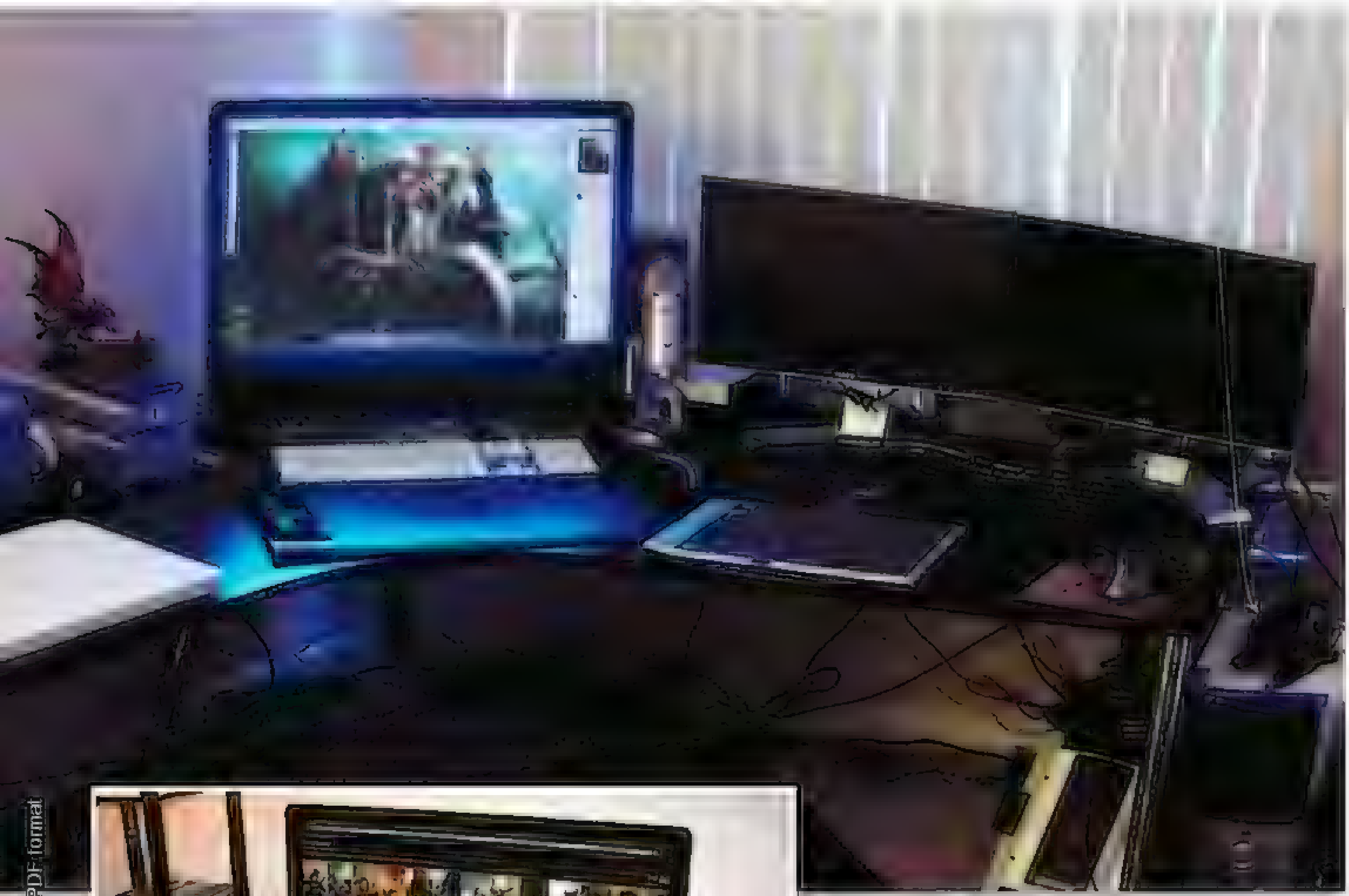
I wouldn't say that my workspace is very exciting or interesting – it's a little on the "daark" side. In fact, I've dubbed it "the Daarken Cave", for obvious reasons.

I like things to be neat, clean and very minimalist. Most of the time I don't bother hanging art or posters on the wall – lately I've been moving every year so that doesn't work so well for me. [illegible] envy people who have really cool things lining their walls [illegible] people with [illegible] of art [illegible] heads sitting on shelves. I never know where to get those things. Where do you get the cool stuff?! What I collect is tons of movies, video games and art books. The next room is packed with almost 900 movies.

Now computers. I have four of them that I use for work, depending on the situation and mood. [illegible] I have an iMac that I use with my large-sized Intuos4, a MacBook Pro that I pair with an Intuos 3, a Dell with a dual-screen setup that I also use with the Intuos4 and a Fujitsu ST5112 Tablet PC. I really like using the Tablet PC because it gives me

I have a Dell computer with a dual-monitor setup. Having two monitors can be a real help when you're working from reference: you can put all your reference material on one screen while working on the other.

You can just see my Nostromo gaming pad that I used to use in combination with my Intuos4.



much more control, and feels more natural, plus the disconnect when using an Intuos can be frustrating when I need to make really precise lines. The other great thing about the Tablet PC is that I can use it outside of the house when I'm on trips. Sometimes I use the docking station with my Tablet PC to make it more like a Cintiq. Maybe one day I'll make the leap to purchase a real Cintiq.

Daarken is a freelance concept artist who's worked on Magic: The Gathering, World of Warcraft TCG and much more. Check out his great art at www.daarken.com.

This new iMac is my wife's – it's the newer version with the larger screen. I'm very jealous of her computer and sneak on it when she isn't looking.

I have a few toys scattered around, including a one-of-a-kind Munny I painted to look like Bloodghast. You can also see my Yeti mic that I use when I'm recording my video tutorials.

In short...

The latest news in brief for digital artists

Jean Genie **Book**

Fables cover artist James Jean has released a brand new art book, Rebus, which collects together paintings he's created since 2008. If you like colourful, disquieting, technically beautiful fantasy imagery, then this one's for you. See more here: **http://bit.ly/q7Q2XU**

Inspired **Intern**

Visual effects company Cinesite has announced the launch of its 2012 Inspire internship programme. The internship focuses on digital matte painting, texturing and animation, and the deadline for applications is 9 January 2012. For more information visit **www.cinesite.com/internships**.

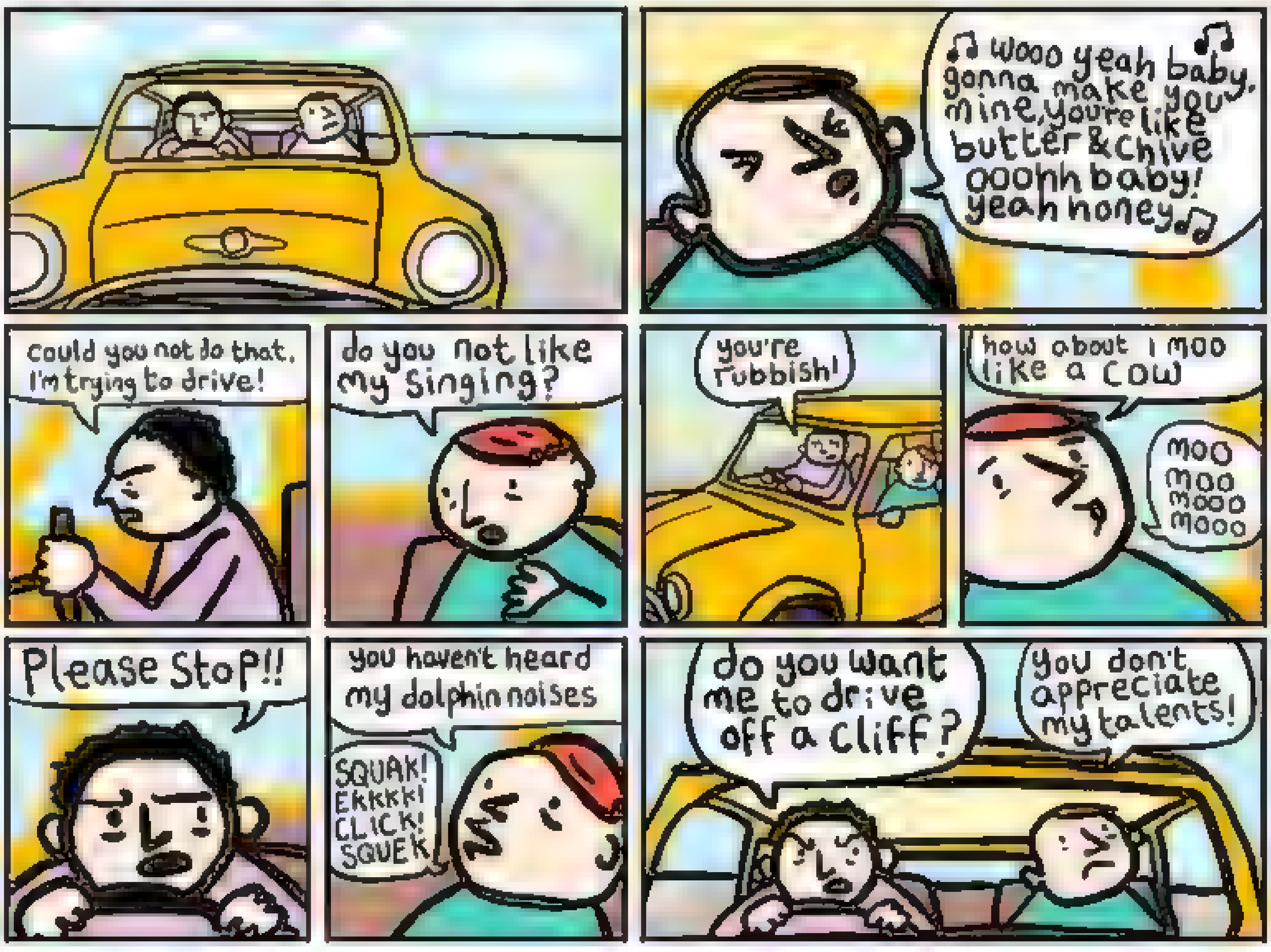
TOM MORELLO'S
ORCHID

Rage **Comic**

Rage Against The Machine guitarist Tom Morello has started on a comic book series called Orchid. With Scott Hepburn doing the art, each issue comes with exclusive Morello music. The first issue's cover featured art by Massimo Carnevale and was released in October. For more, visit **http://bit.ly/pyLPxl**

Life is Humiliation

by Matt Boyce


♫ Wooo yeah baby, gonna make you mine, you're like butter & chive oooh baby! yeah honey ♫
could you not do that, I'm trying to drive!
do you not like my singing?
you're rubbish!
how about I moo like a cow
moo moo mooo moooo
Please Stop!!
you haven't heard my dolphin noises
SQUAK! EKKKK! CLICK! SQUEK
do you want me to drive off a cliff?
you don't appreciate my talents!

Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable

"I want to drag them into a world that could actually exist with dragons and all that stuff."

Hands up who wants Jesper Ejsing to set up a fantasy travel agency... Page 59

It's a TAD awesome!

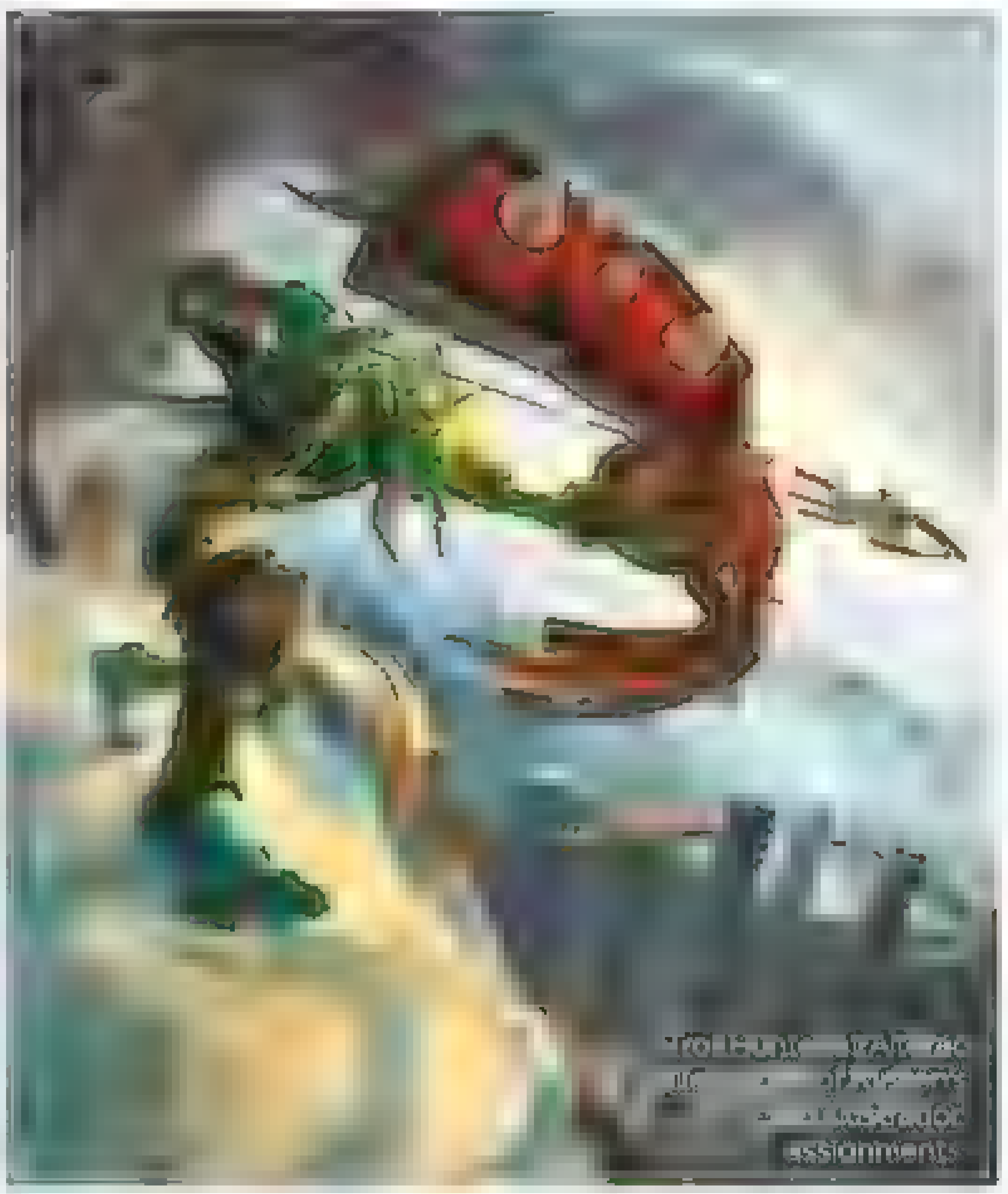
Top trainee The Art Department has announced the winner of its international internship at Massive Black's Shanghai studio

US resident Kirsten Zirngibl started her studies at the ConceptArt.org's TAD (The Art Department) this spring, expecting a 30-month stint of developing her digital art skills. What she wasn't expecting was working alongside some of the head artists on the other side of the world.

That's what she's going to be doing, having won TAD's international internship programme at Massive Black's Shanghai studio. "I'll remain in the States and work with the Shanghai art director and lead concept artist over email and Skype," she says, "though I may visit Shanghai at some point."

Kirsten will learn more about her chosen area of 2D digital art from some of the leading artists in the business. "I'm really interested in concept art and understanding what makes good real-world production art," she enthuses. "I haven't decided whether to pursue games or film, but Massive Black Shanghai is a great way for me to get a foot in the door for both."

You can see why Kirsten won by checking out the art on her website: **www.kirstenzirngibl.com**.



[illegible] assignments

With the highest per capita of under 14s in the world*...

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*Sources: Trading Economics 2011, US Census Bureau, Eurostat, Los Angeles Times, A.T. Kearney, Global Animation Industry: Strategies, trends & opportunities, 2009, Animation Age Ghetto

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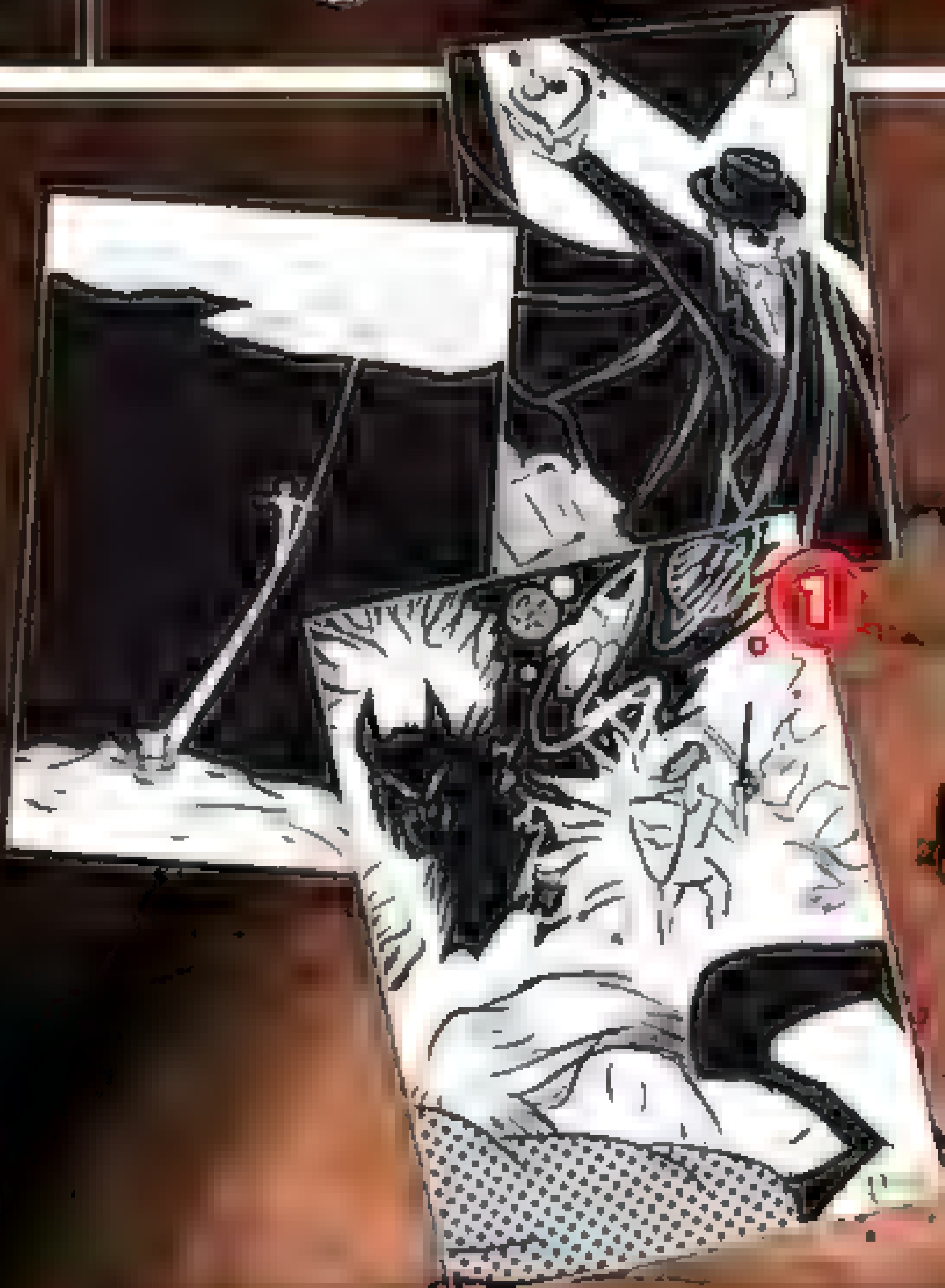
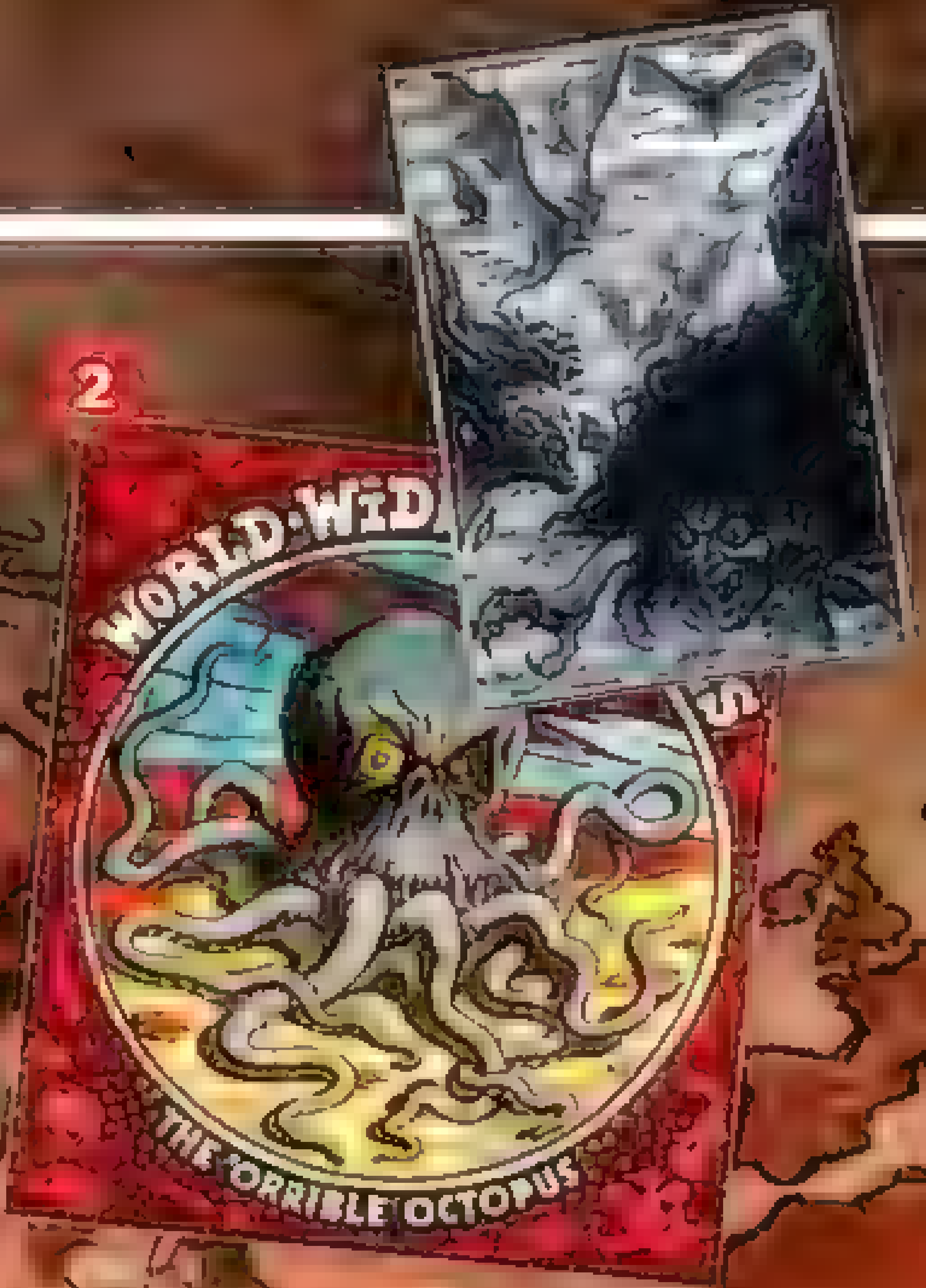


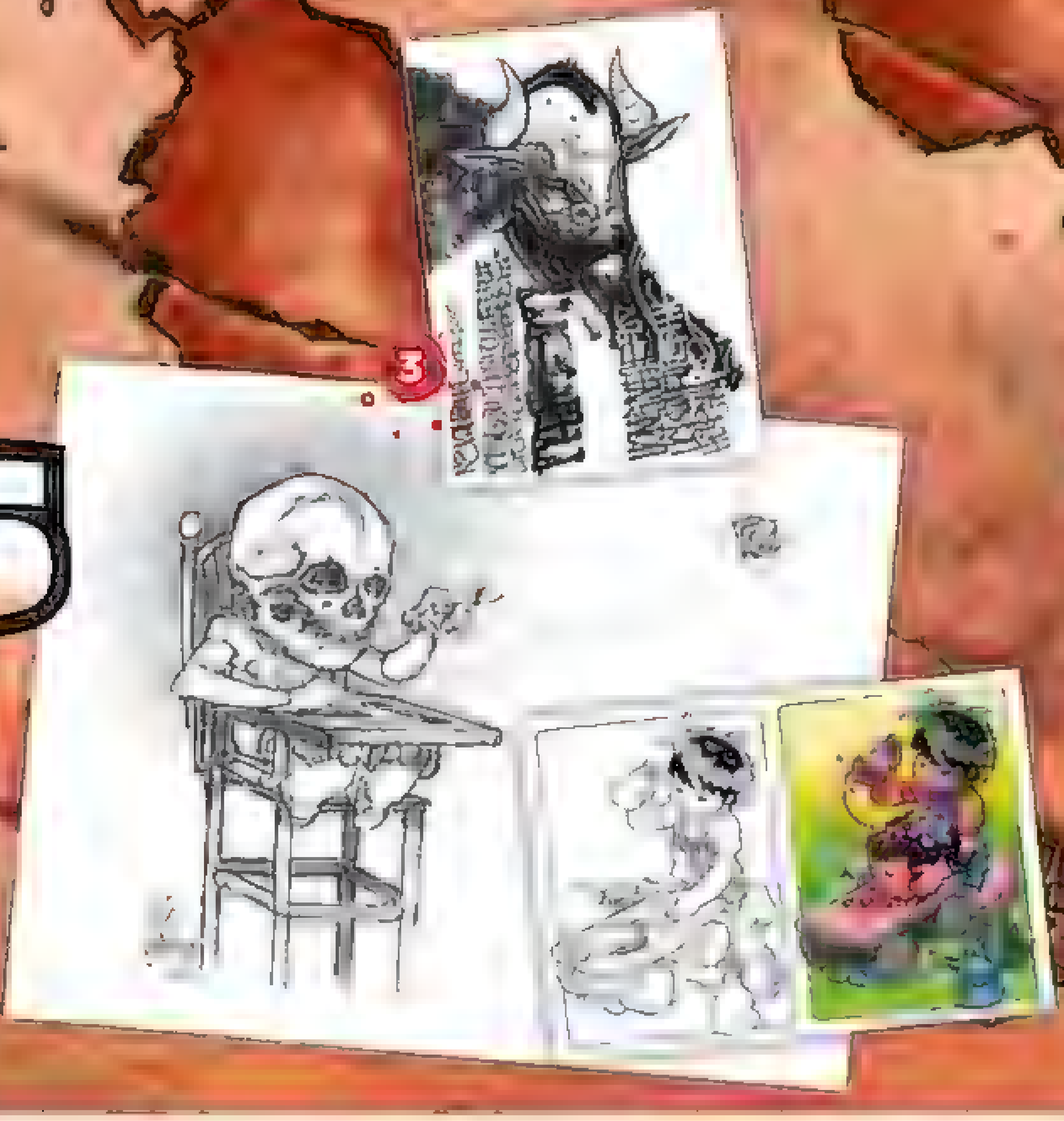


PLANET OF THE ARTS

HERE'S A RUNDOWN OF THE EVENTS AND ART BLOGS THAT HAVE GOT US IN A STIR THIS MONTH. IF YOU'VE GOT A STORY OR EVENT THAT SHOULD BE FEATURED HERE, SEND US THE DETAILS: **PLANET@IMAGINEFX.COM** CHEERS!

Beren

Beren Neale, Staff Writer



THE HIGHER DARK

Rachel H White, US

1 Using the ancient themes of light and dark as her inspiration, Rachel combines extensive texture with [illegible] and white imagery to great effect.

www.rachelhwhite.wordpress.com

MONSTER BRAINS

Aeron Alfrey, US

2 Any blog with the words brains and monsters in the title is okay by us. Aeron's site is a feast to make [illegible] lists, monster artists and photos of beasts from the big screen.

www.monsterbrains.blogspot.com

NATE VAN DYKE

Illustrator

3 This is a regularly updated blog with Nate sharing upcoming projects, a Minotaur-themed art show, personal art and miscellanea. His monkey drawings are fantastic.

www.n8vandyke.wordpress.com

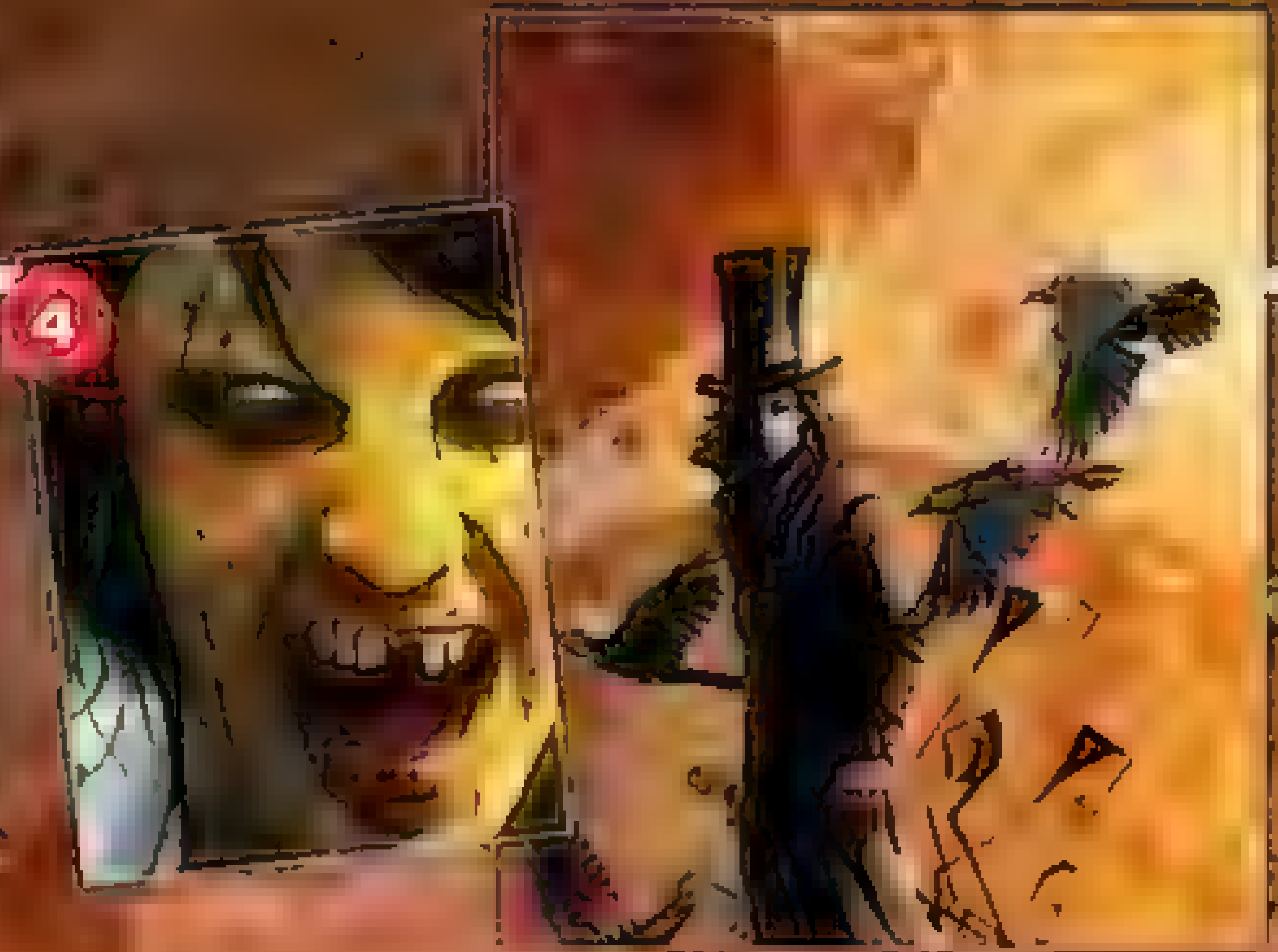
STEVE SAMPSON

Concept artist, England

4 Having worked in comics and games, Steve is now freelancing his talents out to the world. Expect chunky zombies, warrior girls and lots and lots of great colours.

www.thedarkinker.com

4



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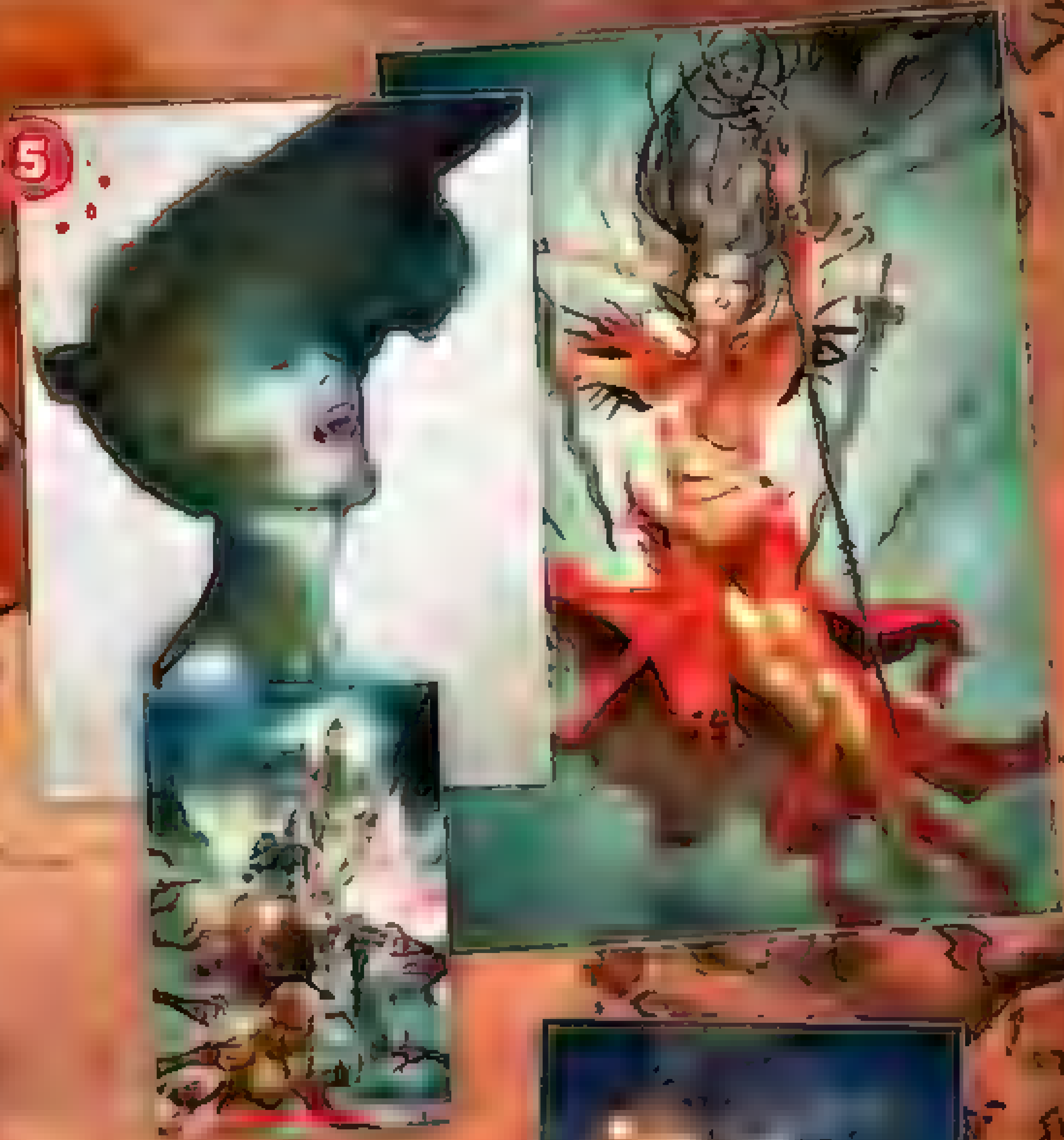

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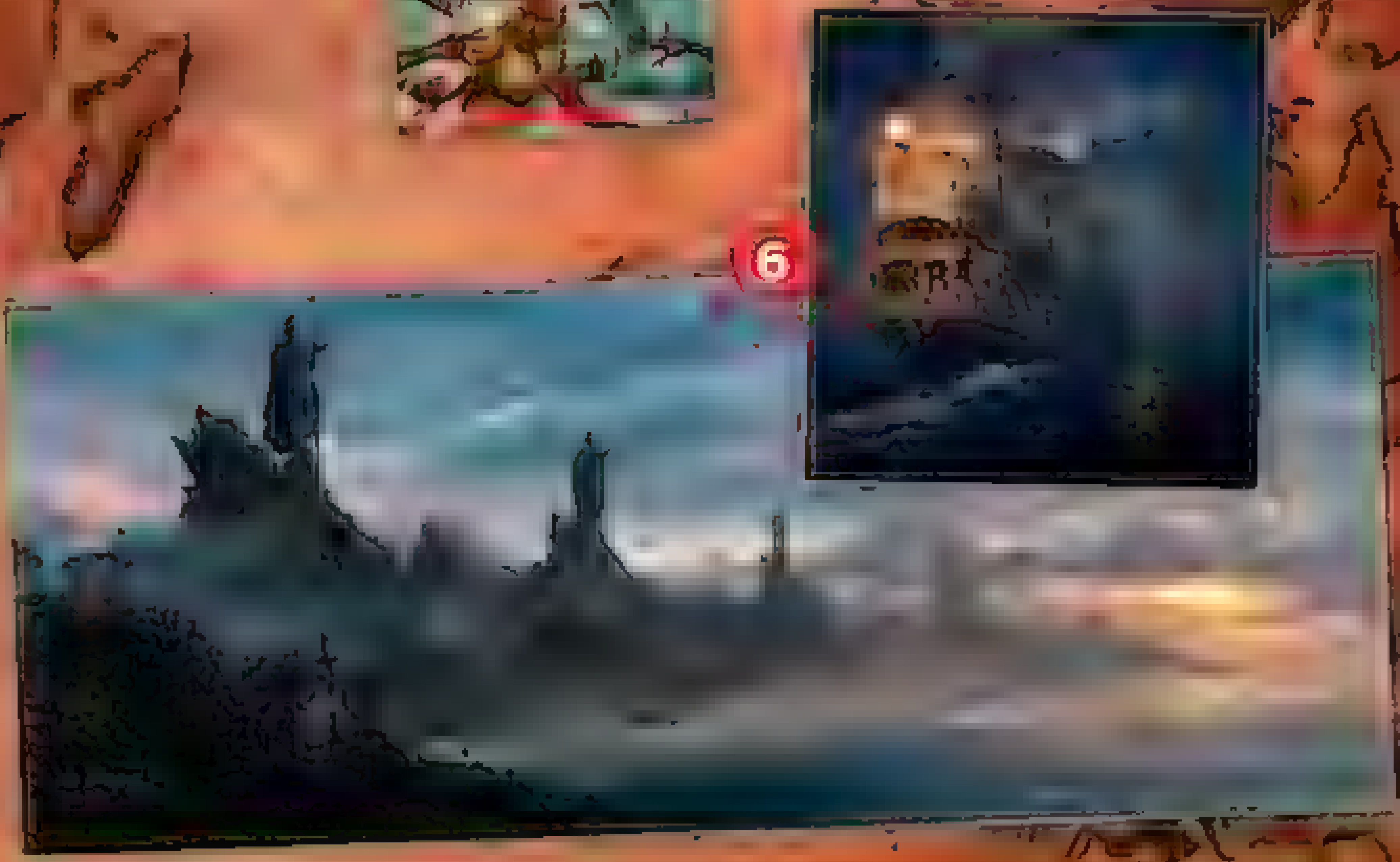


JEAN-SEBASTIEN ROSSBACH

Concept artist | France

5 Jean-Sebastien's blog has had a [illegible] of recent activity. The artist shares recent work and turns cardboard into pieces of artwork.

http://livingrope.free.fr

SAREL THERON

Matte painter | South Africa

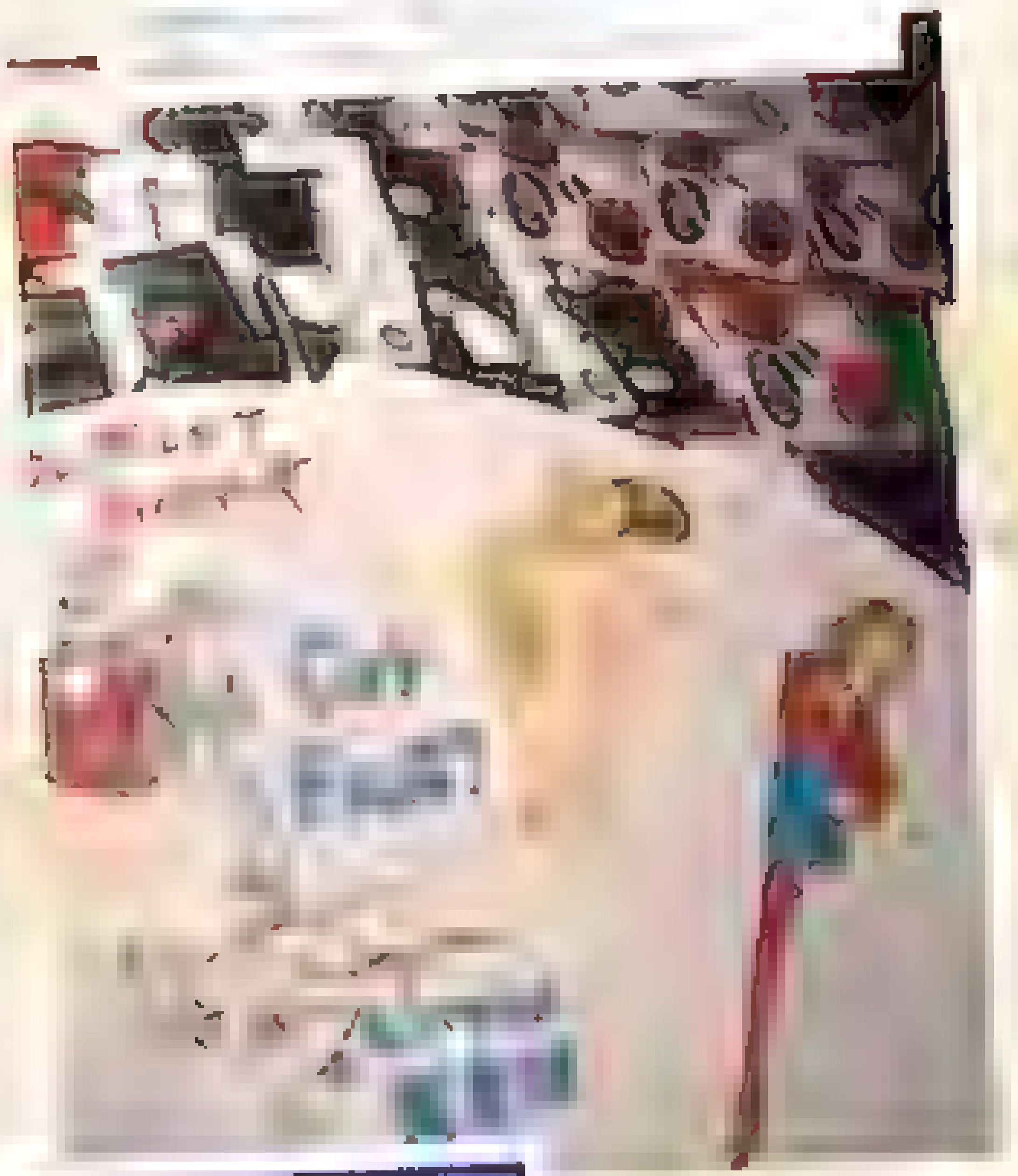
6 [illegible] specialises in matte painting and concept art. There's an impressive showreel that starts as if with a workshop, then displays a selection of his more dramatic images.

www.saareltheron.com

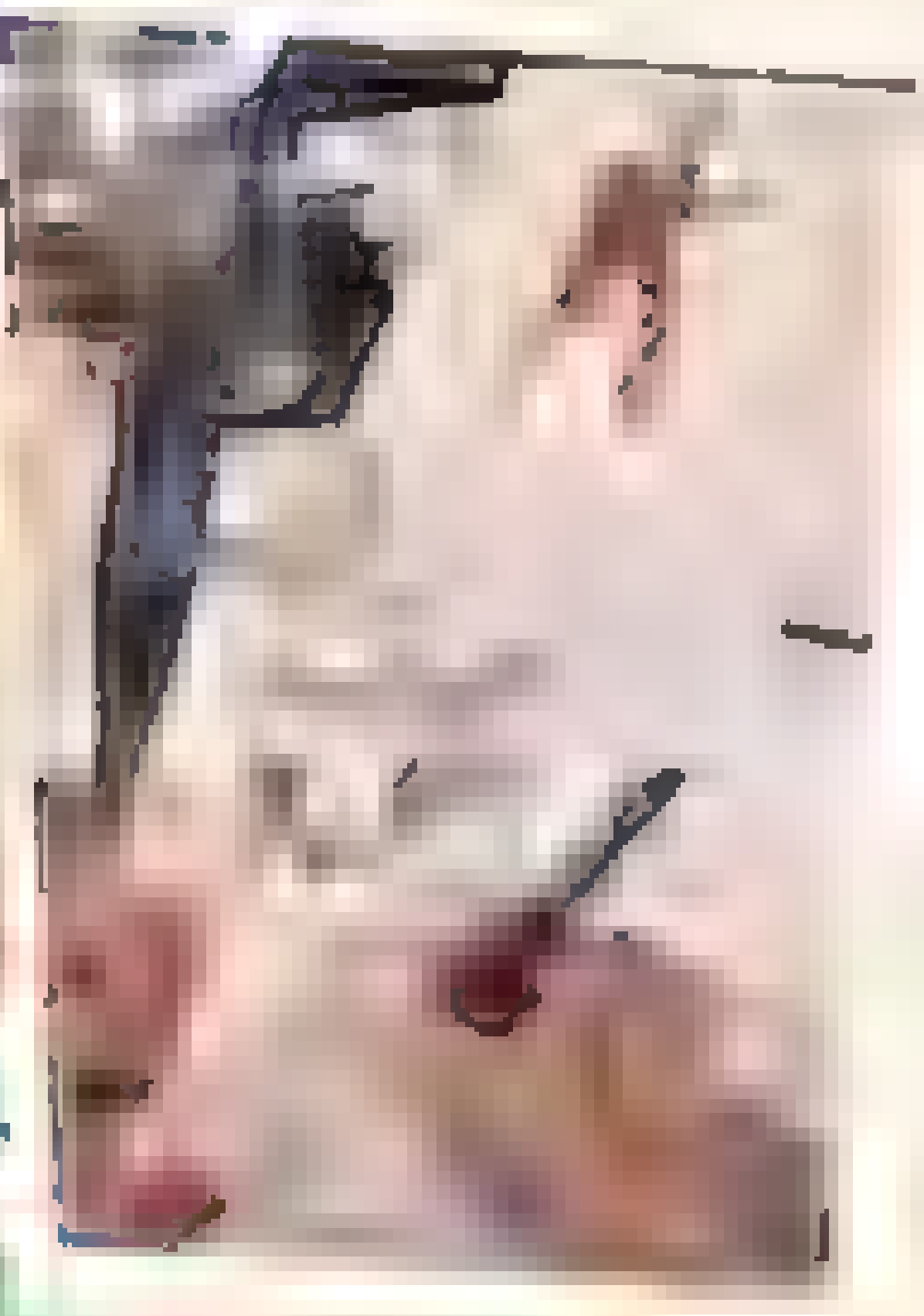
SKETCH JAM

A risqué Doctor Sketchy reaches parts of Leeds other sketch groups can't

Dr Sketchy's Leeds



As well as comic heroes, Dr Sketchy's Leeds features many burlesque acts



The Scarlet Avenger fights Catwoman, over a glass of chilled rose

Tottie Spon Sis (above) shows off some of her super sketches, from October's meet

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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX Forum Winners

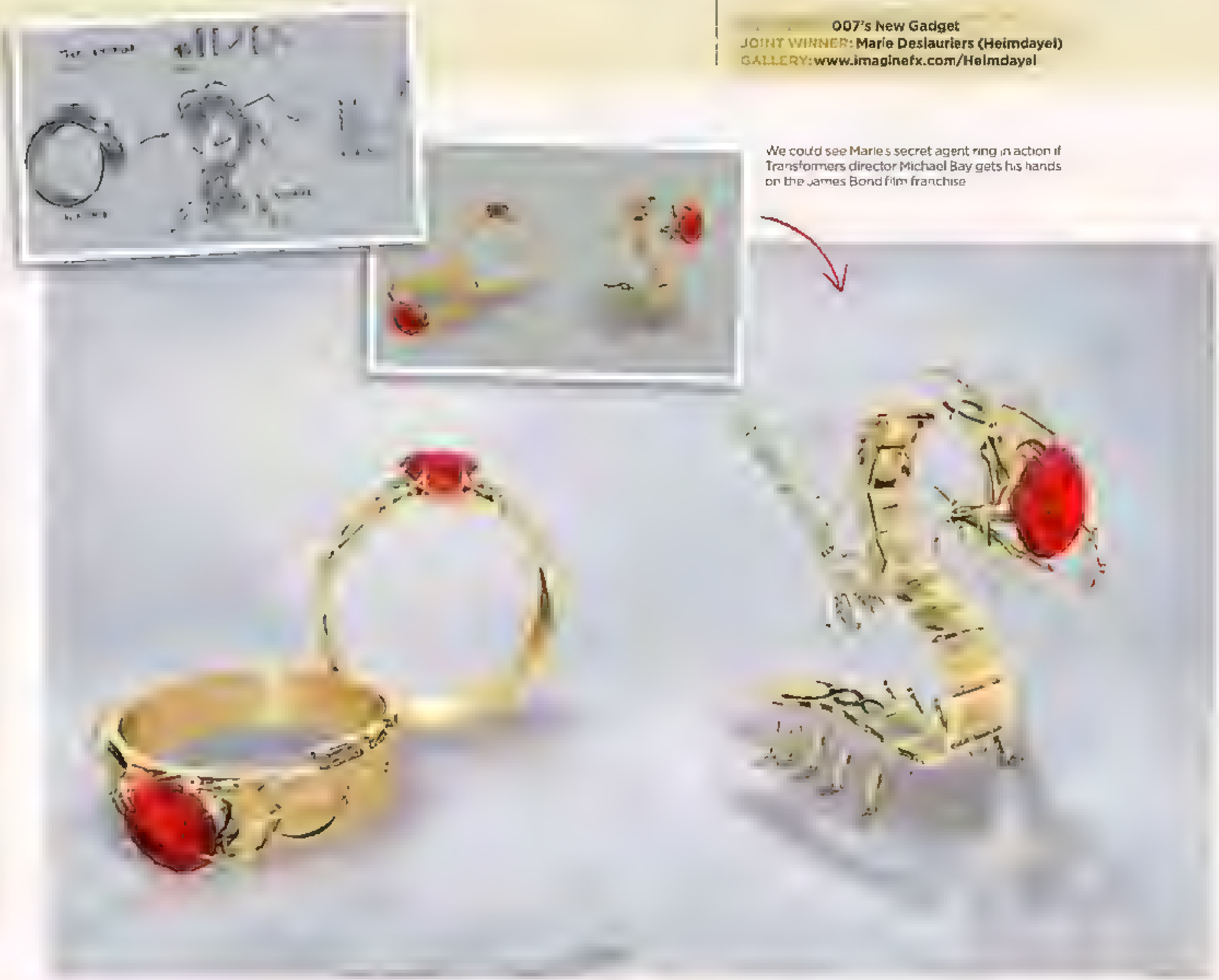
Image of the month

There were two top entrants in our 007 challenge, Marie Deslauriers just edged out Juan Blanco with her keen eye for functioning sci-fi detail

Whether you're a fan of James Bond or not, you've got to admit that he seems to have a lot of cool gadgetry up his well-tailored sleeves. And now one of the ImagineFX gallery challenges has added a few patents for his future use, including Marie Deslauriers's creepy signet ring.

"I've never seen Mr Bond wear any rings," she says, "but I thought that having something [illegible] without needing brute [illegible] would fit the bill nicely." She also found that the nature of 3D software helped the design, too. "By re-using the 3D mesh I was able to create two versions that had the same dimensions," she explains.

[illegible] **007's New Gadget**
JOINT WINNER: **Marie Deslauriers (Heimdayel)**
GALLERY: **www.imaginefx.com/Heimdayel**



We could see Marie's secret agent ring in action if Transformers director Michael Bay gets his hands on the James Bond film franchise

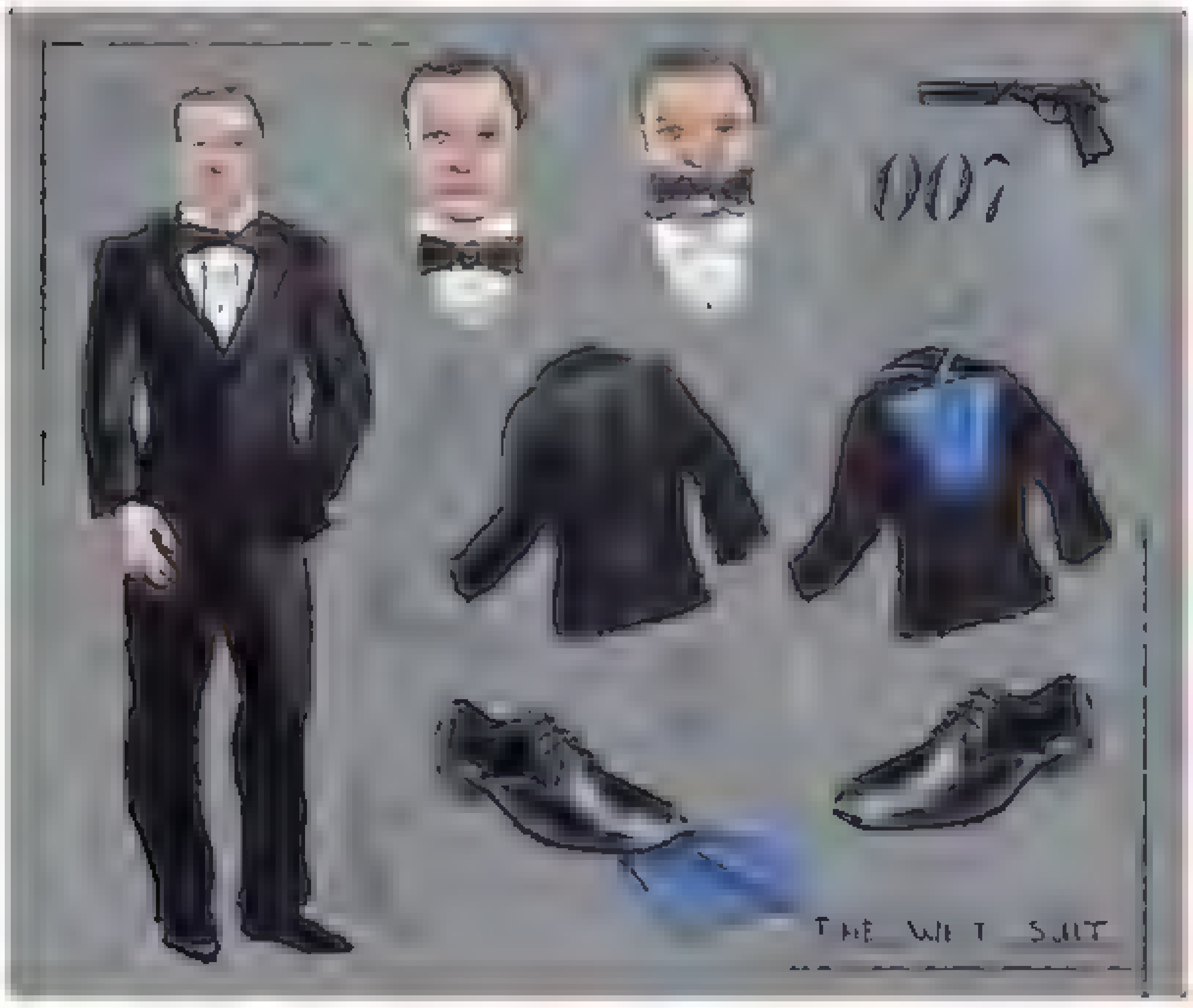
IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Heimdayel's Decapede is both realistic and fantastic. Moreover, the image is beautiful and technically impeccable. What more could you want from a painting?" Antonio Rodriguez (Cano)

Join in!
www.imaginefx.com/myfx

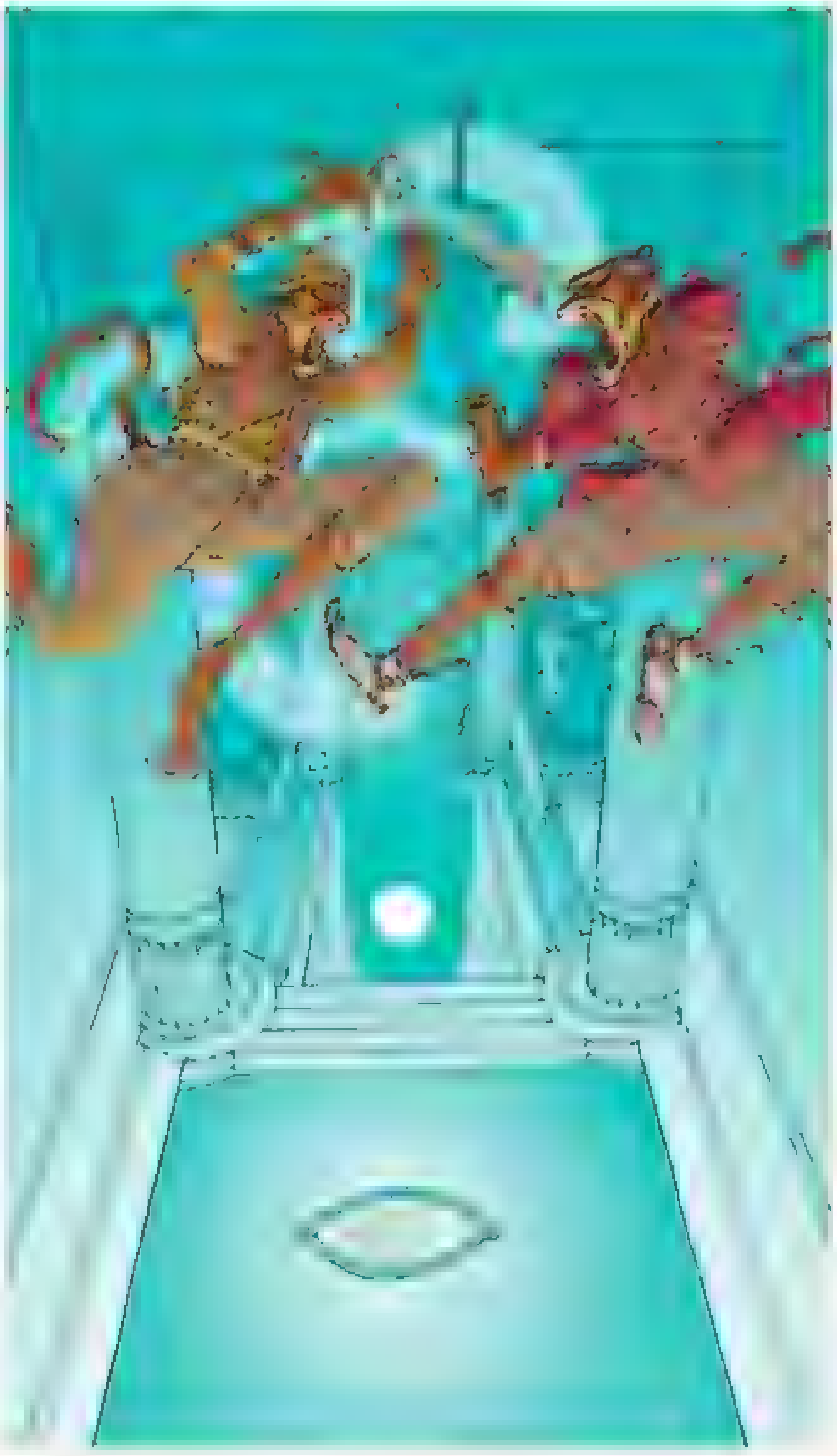
MYFX TITLE: 007's New Gadget
JOINT WINNER: Juan Blanco (Guang)
GALLERY: www.imaginefx.com/guang

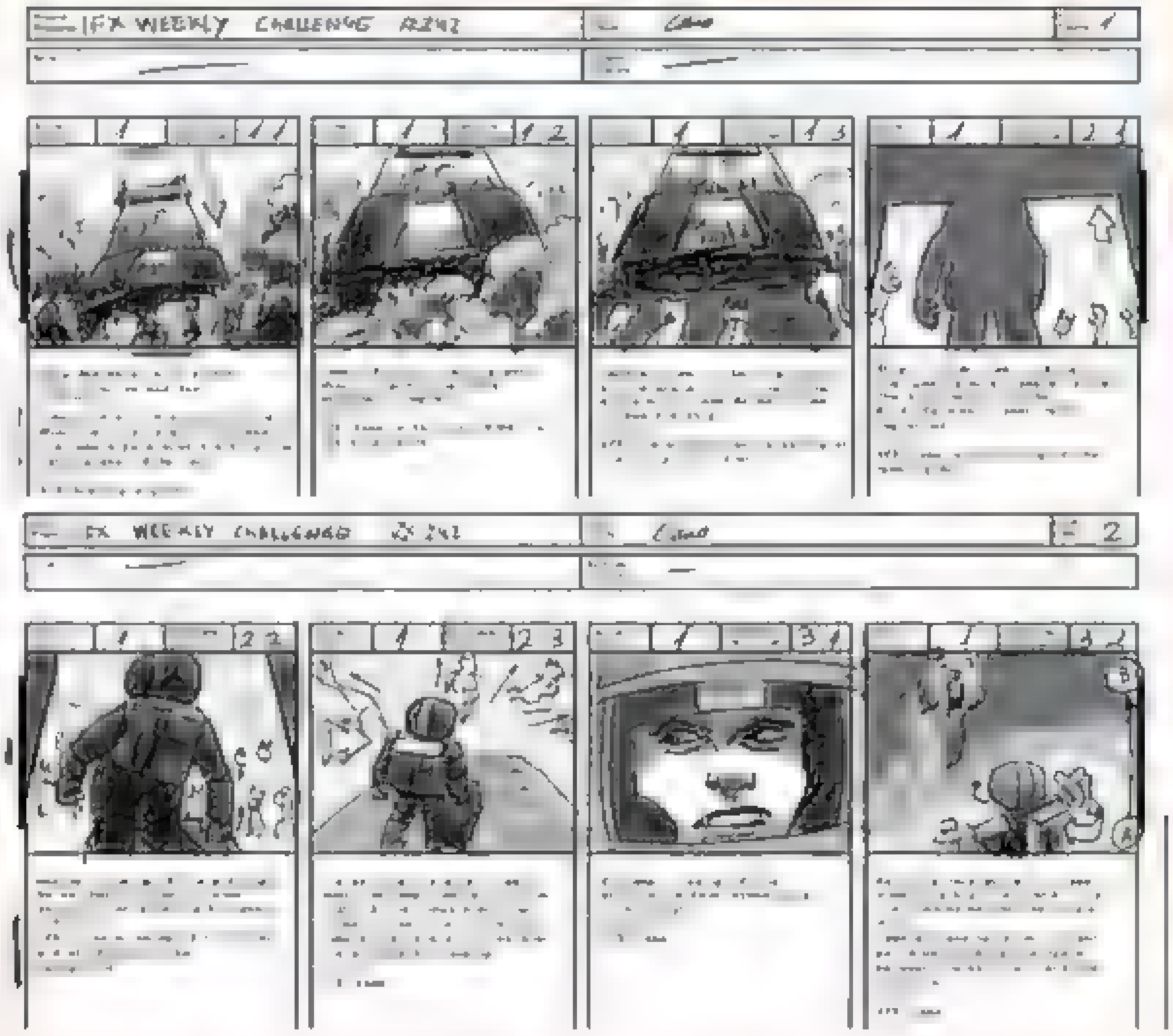
"I watched Goldfinger a few days before the challenge was posted and so my image ended up being a bit more old school. I thought it was the perfect suit to use when on a hit mission on a cruise ship: infiltrate the vessel, steal the plans for world domination, take out a few henchmen, rescue the girl and escape seconds before the bomb detonates. It's not great for deep sea diving, but can be useful to stay under the surface of the water until the wearer is clear of enemy fire."



MYFX TITLE: Pantheon of War
WINNER: David Cuzik Matyslak (kilest)
GALLERY: www.imaginefx.com/kilest

"I like these challenges because they have a time limit, and as an illustrator I'm used to short deadlines – they concentrate the creative process beautifully. Pantheon of War took about four hours using Indian Mogul art and Japanese woodcuts for reference. I drew the monkey gods using Edding 1800 pens and coloured them in Photoshop.





MYFX TITLE: Storyboard
WINNER: Antonio Rodrìguez Cano (Cano)
GALLERY: www.imaginefx.com/Cano

"I was surprised to see 'Storyboard' as a subject for a weekly challenge. At that moment I was storyboarding an amateur short film for the first time, so I just had to enter the challenge. Knowing that almost all storyboards are sketchy, I used it as an excuse for drawing really loosely."

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS

Contact the editor, Claire Howlett, on claire@imaginefx.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK

Follow us on twitter: www.twitter.com/imaginefx

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Ideas for ImagineFX

I love the artwork displayed in ImagineFX every month, but Star Wars always holds a special place in my heart, and I enjoyed your special issue more than ever before – so thank you! It made me wonder, though: can you cover how to do lightsaber style lighting effects in paintings? Or how hard, moving, light sources can be included in an image?

I was lucky enough to pick up a copy of the ImagineFX Anatomy book, and have to say well done on such a brilliant guide! I'm hoping to teach some art skills to youth groups in my area soon, and I'll be recommending the book to all of my students as essential reading! It did remind me of the biggest criticism I get of my work – all my characters are too skinny. Can you do a workshop sometime on how body fat affects a character? Like how people are affected differently by age, sex and so on, or how it affects the weight and lighting of a portrait?

Ian Taylor, Hartlepool, England

Claire replies I'm looking at revisiting and expanding our anatomy edition again soon, and your idea about painting body fat is definitely worth looking into. Thanks Ian!

Our well-received Star Wars issue prompts Ian Taylor to enquire about painting lightsaber effects, as well as a host of other art topics.

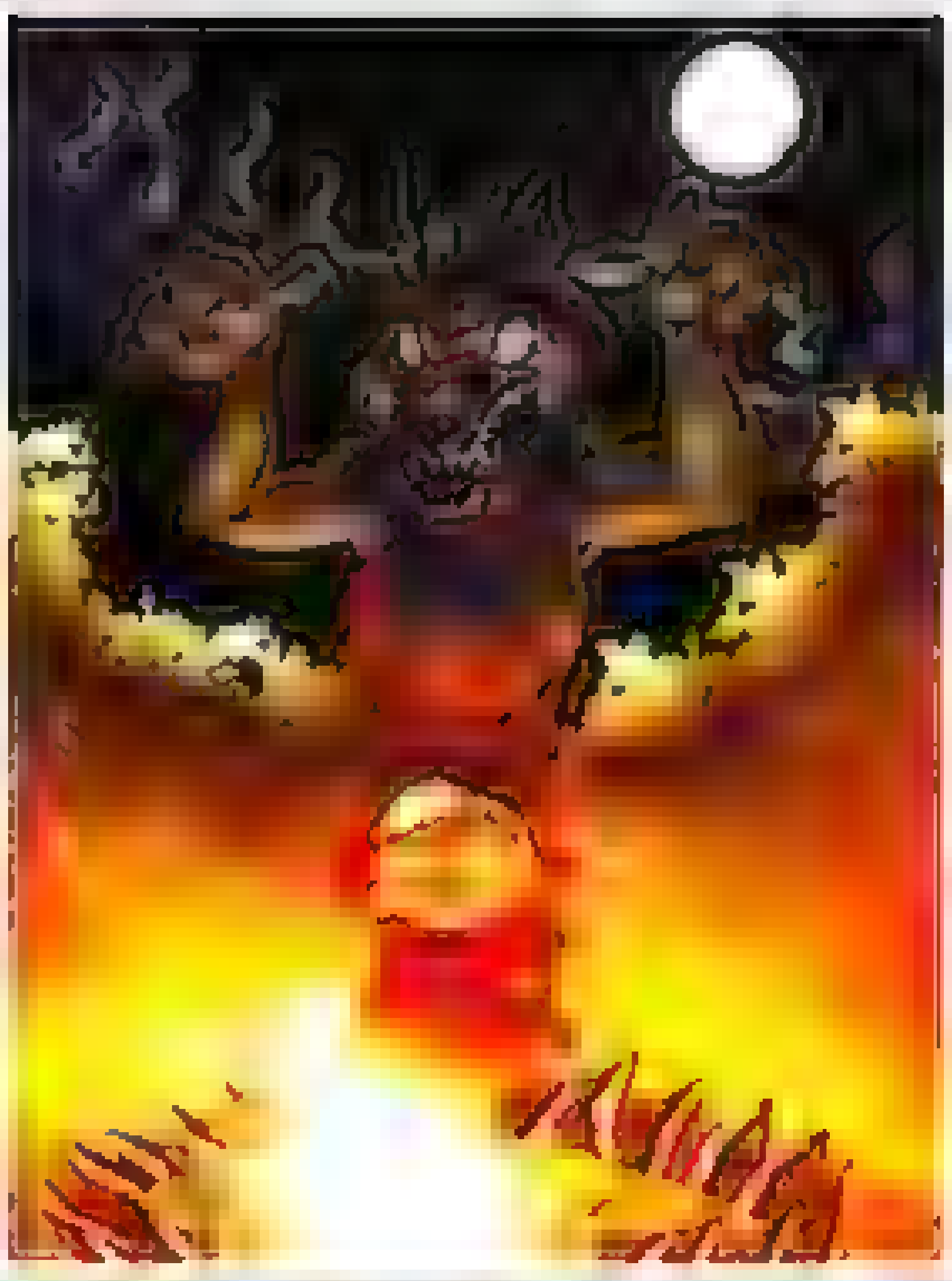
What price art?

I'm a former civil engineer who decided to give up on his career and focus on what I love: comics and illustration. With the current economic crisis, I didn't make enough money to leave my parents' house and be on my own, so I thought that if I couldn't support myself with a job I hated, I should try it with something I loved. I believe that hardship sometimes presents hidden opportunities.

Things are looking up. My work was featured on issue 71's DVD, and recently I was hired to illustrate a children's book. This latest assignment, while it made very happy, presented me with a problem: I have no idea how to charge for my work. I'm not naive and I don't believe art is priceless, but it shouldn't be free, either. I think you could write an article that would help newbies such as myself, because it's an important issue: charge too much, you risk losing the job and the client; charge too little, and you risk getting a reputation for cheap labour that will be hard to shake.

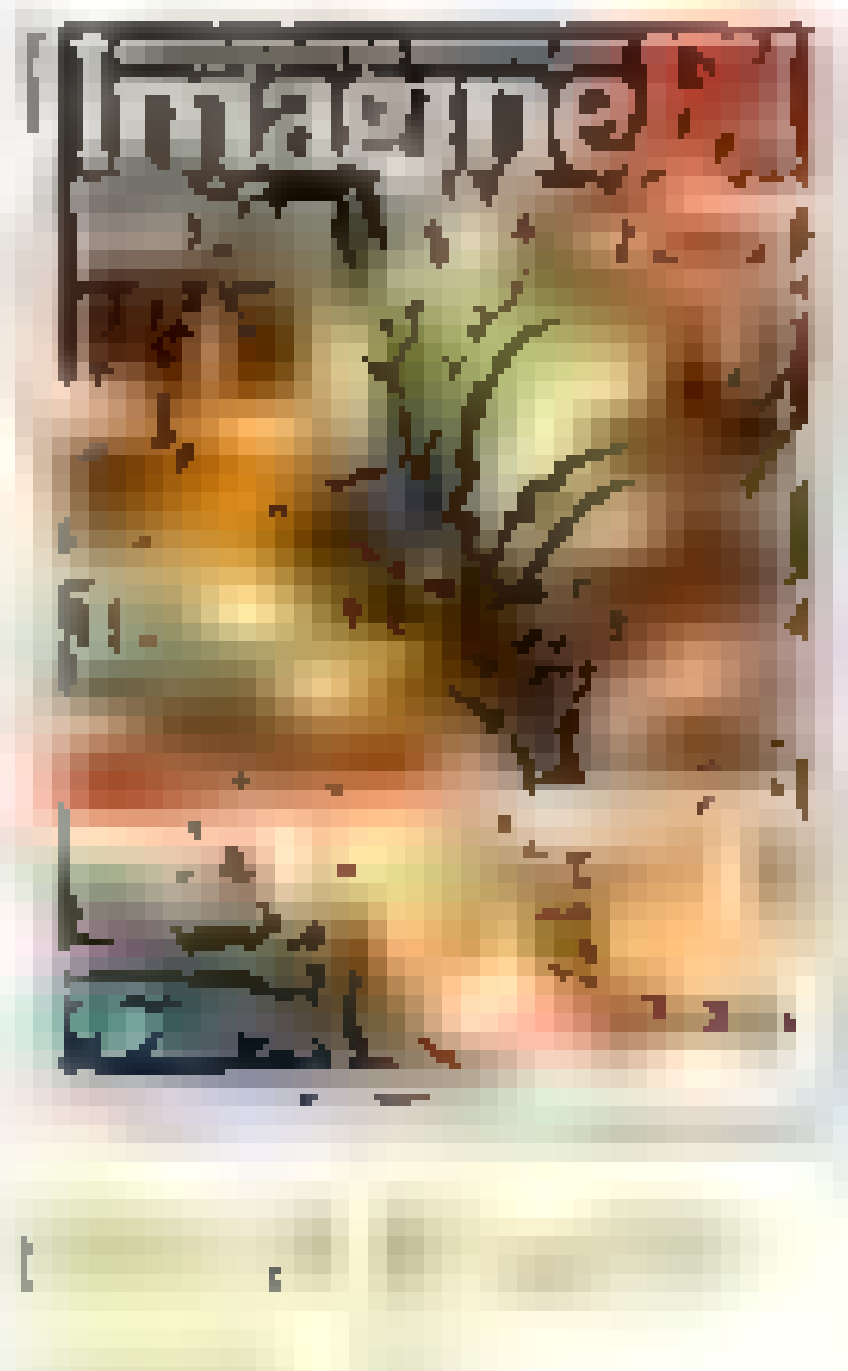
Keep up the good job, and as a parting gift, I'm attaching a piece I recently completed.

João Baptista, via email



Civil engineer-turned-illustrator João Baptista raises the practical question of how much a commercial artist who's new to the business should charge clients.

Claire replies Great news about the commission, João. I agree that getting your fee right is very important. Perhaps we'll chat to some artists soon about how to know the price of your market.



We've still got a few copies left, but you need to move fast! See page 53 for details on how to get hold of one.

True colours

I'm grateful for this amazing magazine! It helps me build my motivation in pursuing a career in digital art. Right now I'm working at a small indie flash game developer as a 2D artist and animator. I really love to draw and create concepts, but unluckily I am colour blind – it's partial, though, not total greyscale colour blind. It annoys me as an artist! I feel like my art doesn't have a vivid and attractive sense of colours.

I'm a self taught artist and I really don't have a clue what to do to choose the right colours in an artwork. Sometimes I just copy from photos, or just randomly choose a colour that seems right. Are there any great artists that have the same handicap as me? And how do they overcome it? I want to know because I have a passion for the games industry but I'm afraid that I can't give it my all.

August Huang, Indonesia

Claire replies After having a peek at your gallery I wouldn't say that you struggle with colours! I don't know of a colour blind artist. Maybe the readers can help? Do you know of any similarly affected artists? Can you help August overcome his issue with colours? Let us know.

Star Letter
Premium Membership

Our star letter writer wins a dA Premium Membership!

The Force is strong… again

Issue 74 was a huge kick up the derriere of my creative group and go. Not just because of the Star Wars articles, which were excellent, but the article with Iain McCaig.

Many years ago, when studying art at college, I used to bump into Iain at various gaming events, like Games Day, as he gave art workshops for Ian Livingstone. He was one of the most helpful, friendly and genuinely encouraging artists I've ever known. After college I saw him a few times around Kilburn until I came to a career to either pursue comic art – because I was reasonably competent with a nib and ink/watercolour – or working in film and theatre as a swordsman. I chose the latter for ten years and didn't keep up with my art.

Reading Iain's article reminded me how passionate I once was about my art, that I did have the choice to pick up a pencil and carry on. So an account on DeviantART is opened and the pencil sharpened. Maybe next year this old bent dog might even go digital… when all the workshop advice for Photoshop sinks in! Thanks for the article. It would be great to read a longer article from Iain – just to keep me on my toes!

Shane Tomlinson, via email

Claire replies Shane, it's great to hear that we – via Iain McCaig – have given you the imperative to pick up a pencil again. Hopefully the Star letter prize of a premium account on deviantART will give you an even bigger push to get creating again.

LEARN HOW TO PAINT A SITH LORD

Iain McCaig's creation of Darth Maul has a positive effect on amateur artist Shane Tomlinson.

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Artists' opinions

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Andrew Jones, concept artist

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Jonny Duddle, freelance artist

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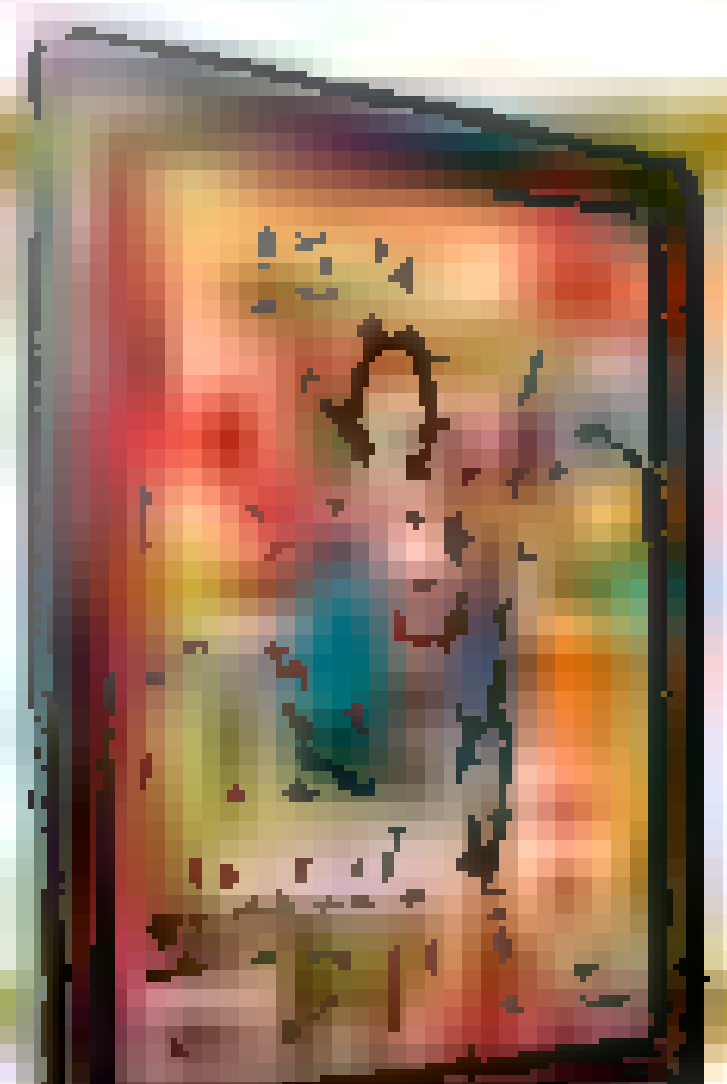

Artist Q&A

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The FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX panel

Lauren K Cannon

Lauren is a freelance fantasy artist who specialises in the surreal. She lives in a small woodland village in New Jersey, US.

www.navate.com

Jonathan Standing

Jonathan is an English artist and illustrator. He's based near Toronto, Canada, and works for a developer in the video games industry.

www.jonathanstanding.com

Mélanie Delon

Mélanie is a freelance fantasy illustrator. She works as a cover artist for several publishing houses and on her personal artbook series.

www.melaniedelon.com

Manon

Manon is a freelance artist who specialises in fantasy, horror and portraiture. She enjoys painting drooling beasties and cute creatures.

http://artbymanon.com

Paco Rico Torres

Paco is a freelance illustrator living in Spain. He's painted art for several card games, magazines, books and role-playing games.

www.pacorico.blogspot.com

Brynn Metheney

Brynn was raised in the Mojave desert and moved to the Bay Area in 2006. Creature and animal illustrations are her forte.

www.brynnart.com

Jeremy Enecio

Jeremy graduated in 2008 from the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore. He lives in New York City as a freelance illustrator.

www.jenecio.com

Question

Can you give me some help on designing and painting the hair of a female warrior?

Tyler Keyon, US

Answer

Mélanie replies

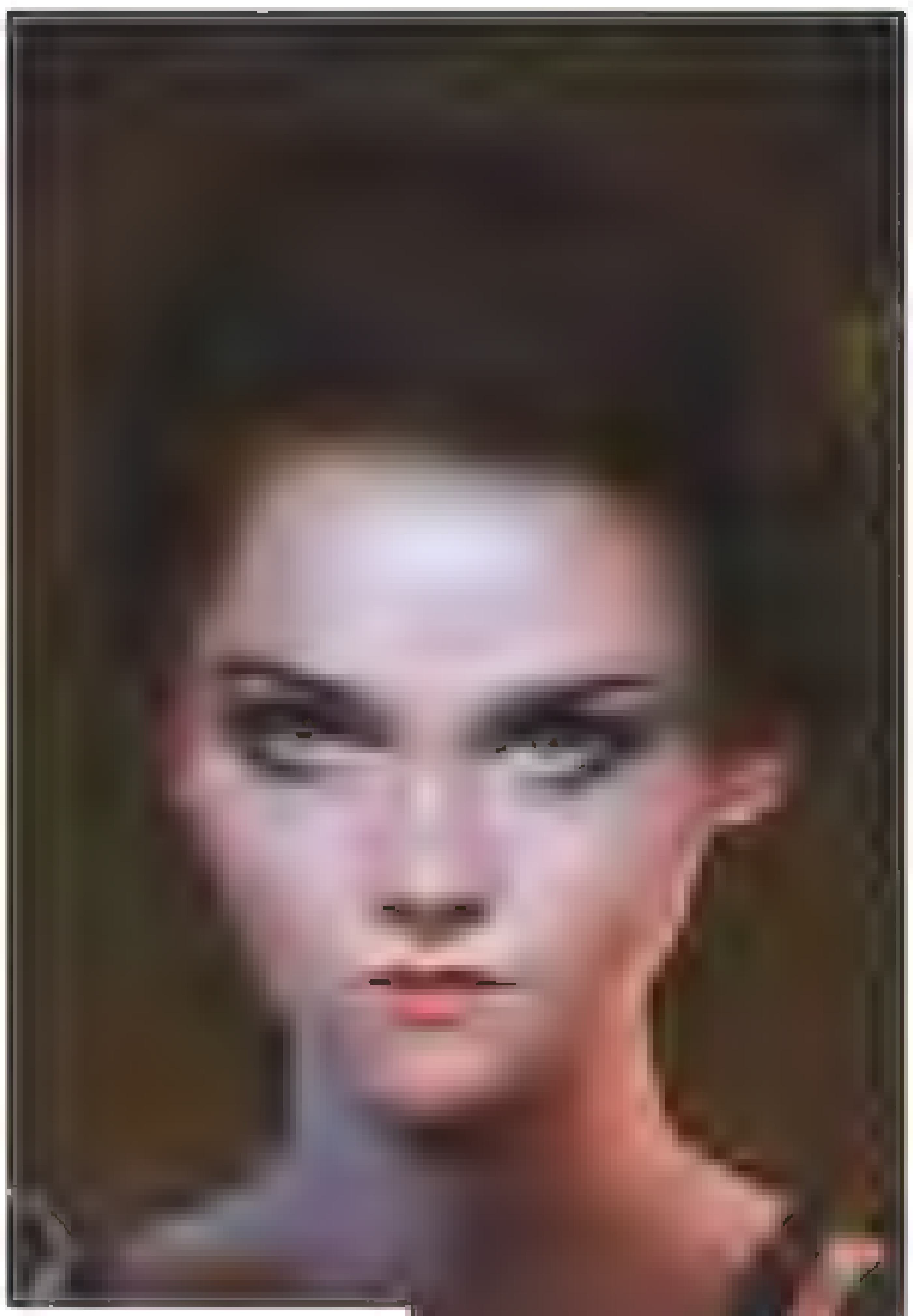
Painting a female warrior isn't as easy as you might think, especially when it comes to creating the look of her hair. She must look like a woman rather than a muscle-bound male, yet her hair must not get in the way while she's fighting on the battlefield.

So, the main thing to do is to think about the general style. Here I've chosen to tie her hair back, with some volume on the top to avoid it looking too masculine. I'm free to play with the haircut – adding some braids for example – as long as the final result looks realistic for a warrior.

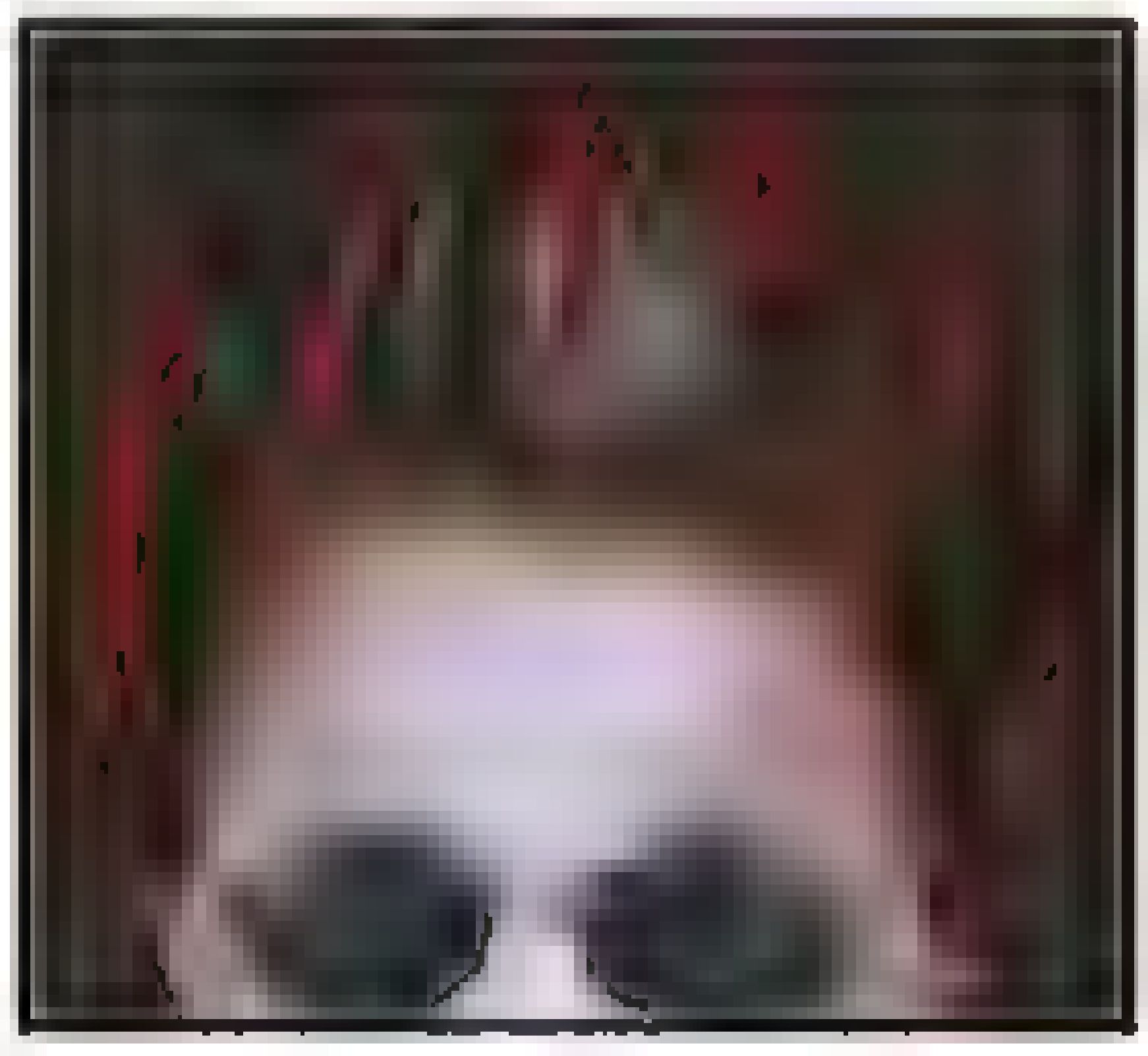
Once I have the design in mind I start painting. Usually I begin with large blocks of colours, just to get the general shape of the element down on the canvas. In this case I just need to sketch a big, brown mass on the top of her head, which will become her hair. The step is really important – it will determine the look – and doing a simple sketch will help to see which haircut will suit your character best. This is the best time to try different looks for your fighter.

A tight hairstyle, like the one that I've chosen, doesn't mean it has no life. As long as you have her neck and ears showing then the rest can be a bit messy – she's a warrior after all. I paint her with one or two wild, small strands of hair floating around her face, which gives the impression of movement.

Another important thing is the colours. Hair reflects a lot of colour, such as the sky or the colour of the environment, so the more variations in colour you add, the more realistic the hair will look.

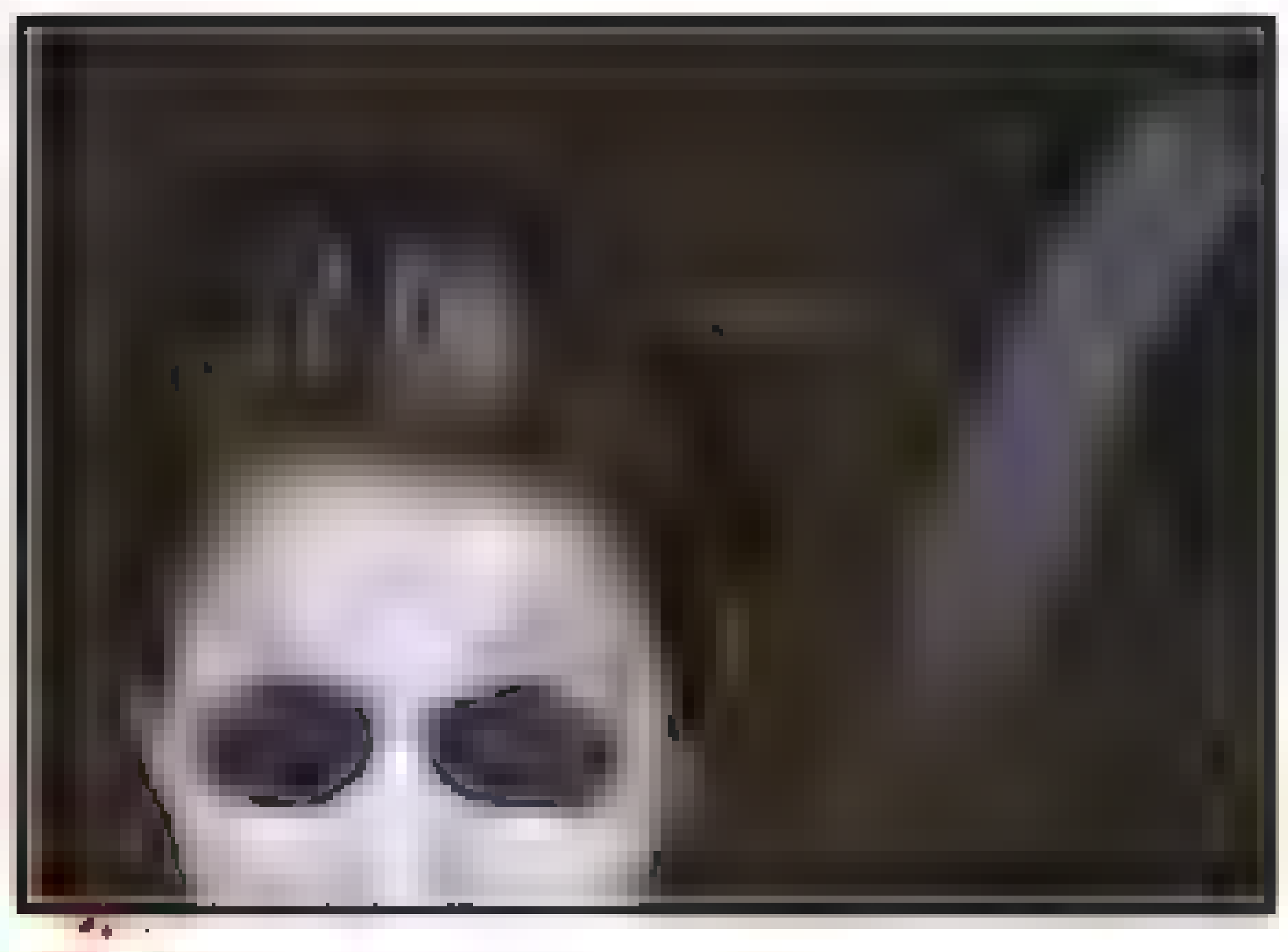


A warrior's haircut must be practical and not look out of place on the battlefield. Long hair would be tied up so not as to obstruct their vision.

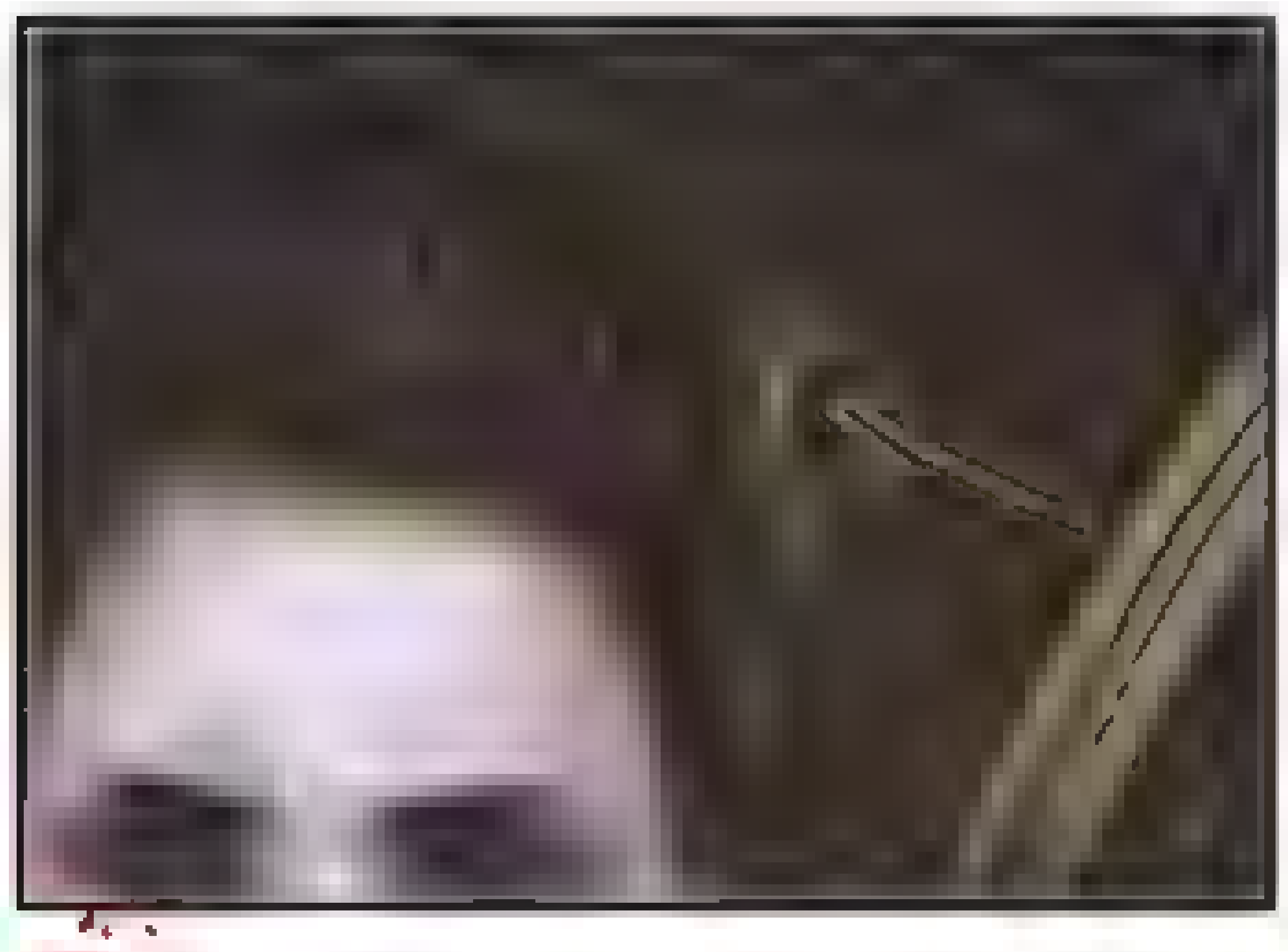


This is the basic shape of the hairstyle. The hair is tight on the back, so it's important to follow the curve of the head with the strands.

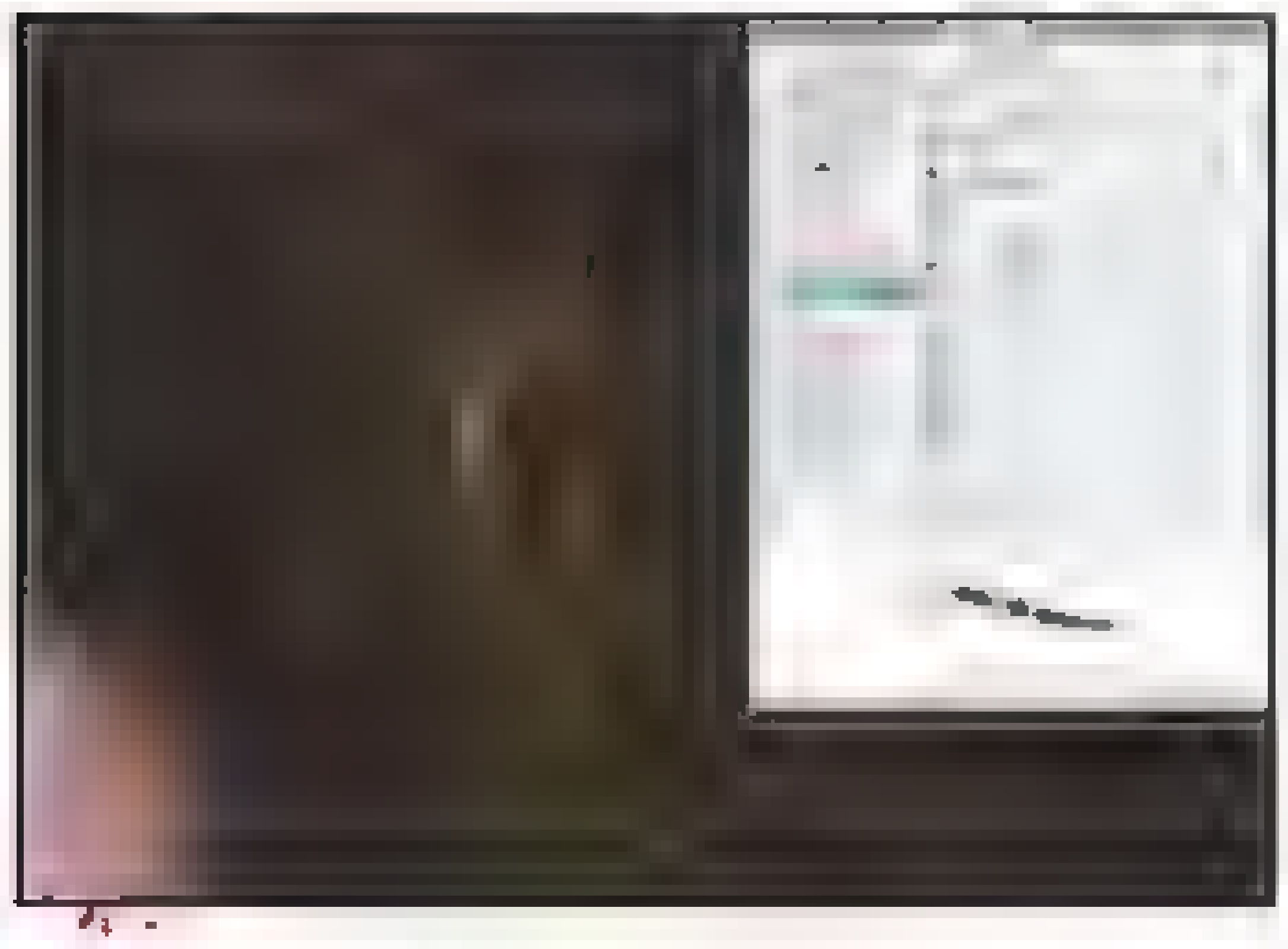
Step-by-step: Painting a practical warrior's haircut



① I sketch the base with a custom brush and a dark tone. I never start painting hair with a light colour – it's simpler to add light than paint shadows. The main light source is above her head, and because it's a cold light I choose a very pale violet. This hue makes the hair shine and will bring more dynamism to the character.



② Now I refine the strands. The hair is tied back so every strand must come from the top of the head and follow over to the back of her head. I add more detail to the hair, especially where the light is strong. Her lengths of hair are generally tight, but to make it look more realistic I add a few loose strands here and there.

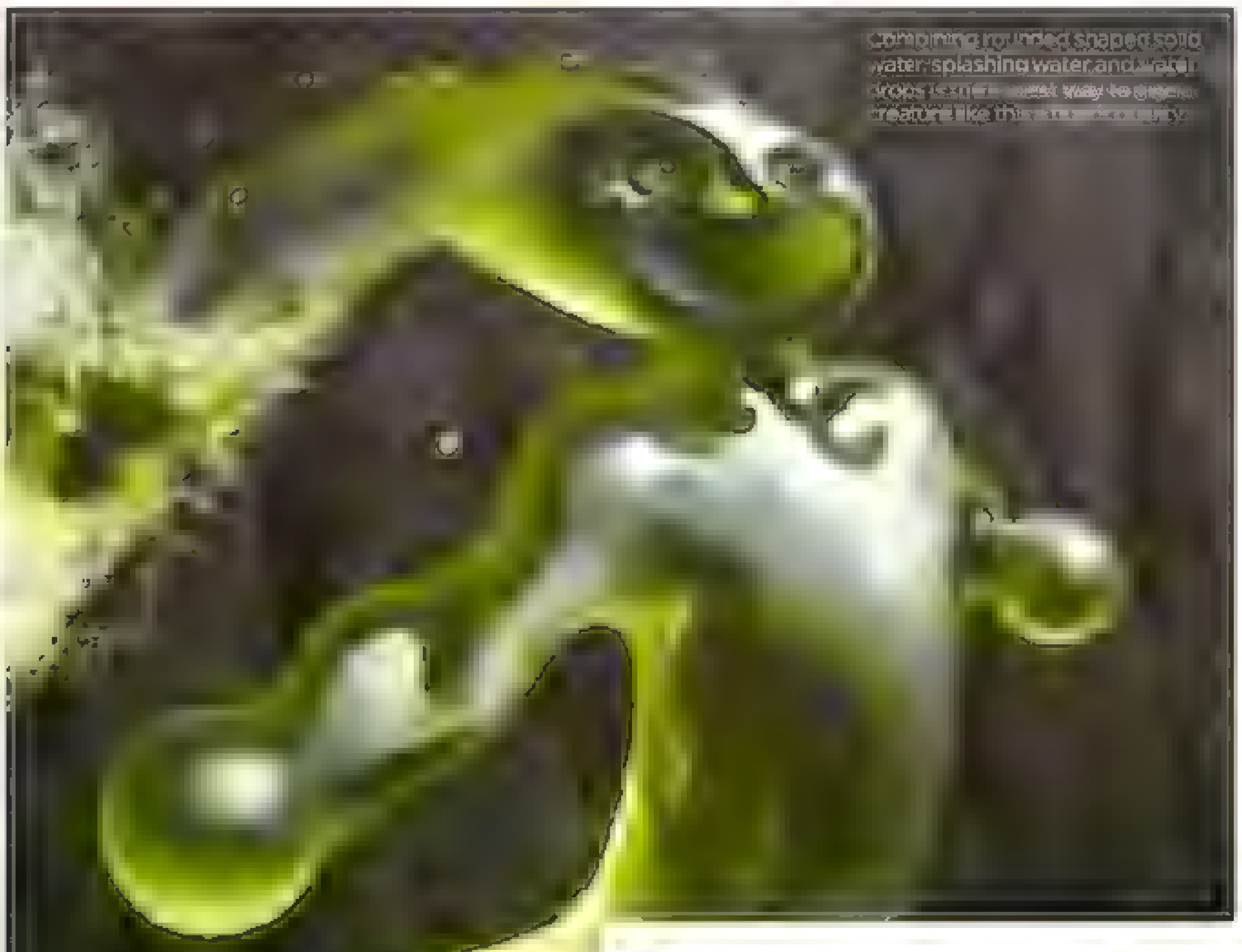


③ After refining and cleaning the painting, I add more contrast to the hair and some shadows on the edge of her forehead and hair. I also introduce more detail, such as the small leather strap. Adding light to increase the tight effect on the head's side and more dots of light on the wild single hair, enhances the realism.

Question

How do I make a water-based character look like he's in motion, yet have a solid appearance?

Daniel Horsburgh, Australia



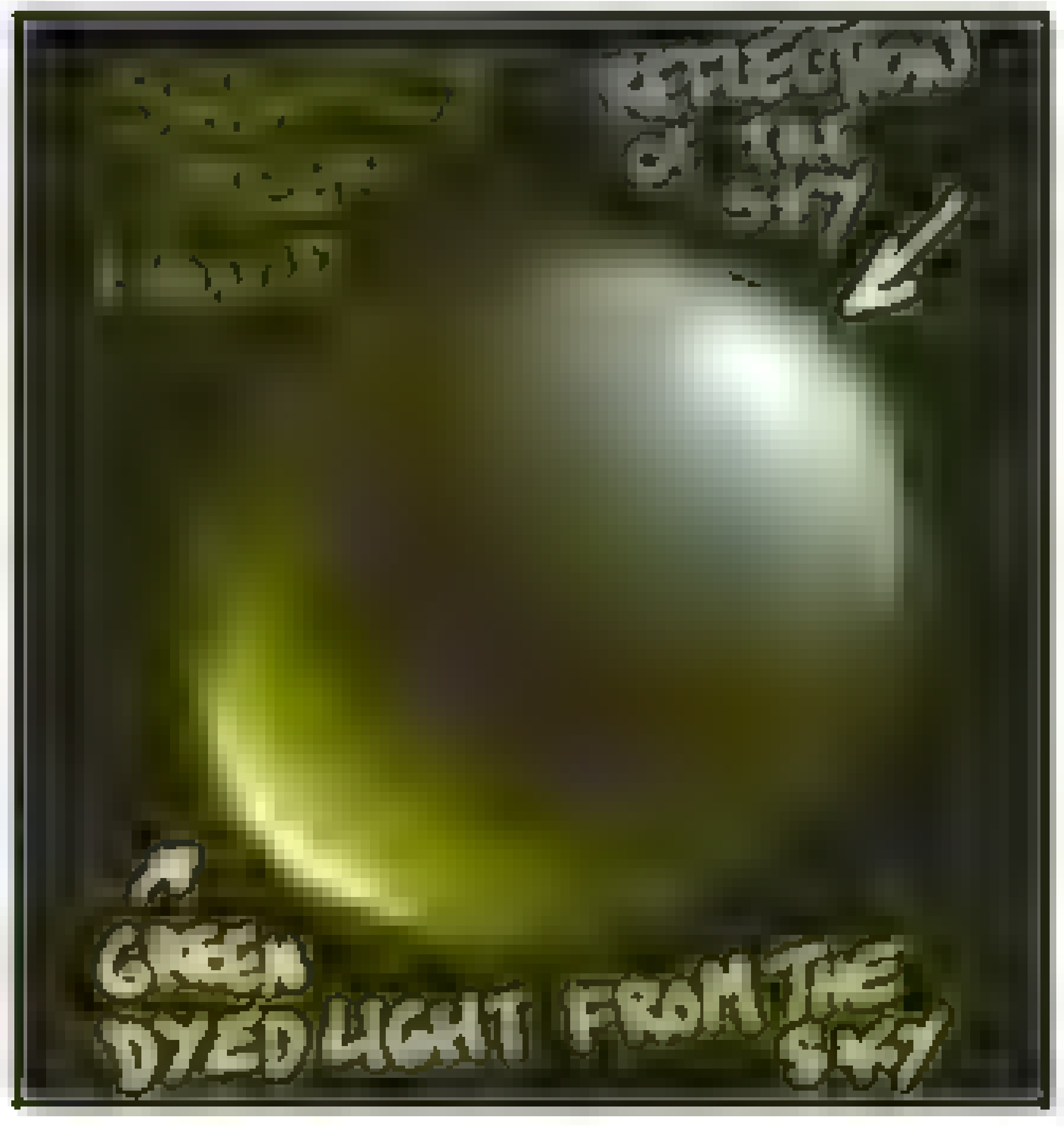
Combining rounded shaped solid water, splashing water and water drops is the easiest way to create creatures like this [illegible]

Answer

Paco replies

A solid object can't flow, so to make a creature made of solid water look fluent you have to alternate solid parts with normal liquid parts. If you manage to make the solid parts look like water and you combine them with the other flowing parts in a harmonic way then you've won half the battle!

Painting flowing water isn't particularly difficult. In contrast, painting a solid figure made of water can be tricky. There are some things you must have in mind when painting liquids. They are shiny and they reflect the light, much like a mirror. They're also transparent and light goes through them, so there should be light in the opposite direction of the light source. You can see through them (distorted though it is), so in the shadow parts the background colour should be visible (the thinner the liquid is, the more visible the background colour will be, and vice versa).


REFLECTION OF THE SKY
GREEN DYED LIGHT FROM THE SKY

If you paint solid water it may not look like water unless you make sure to paint it like a real liquid

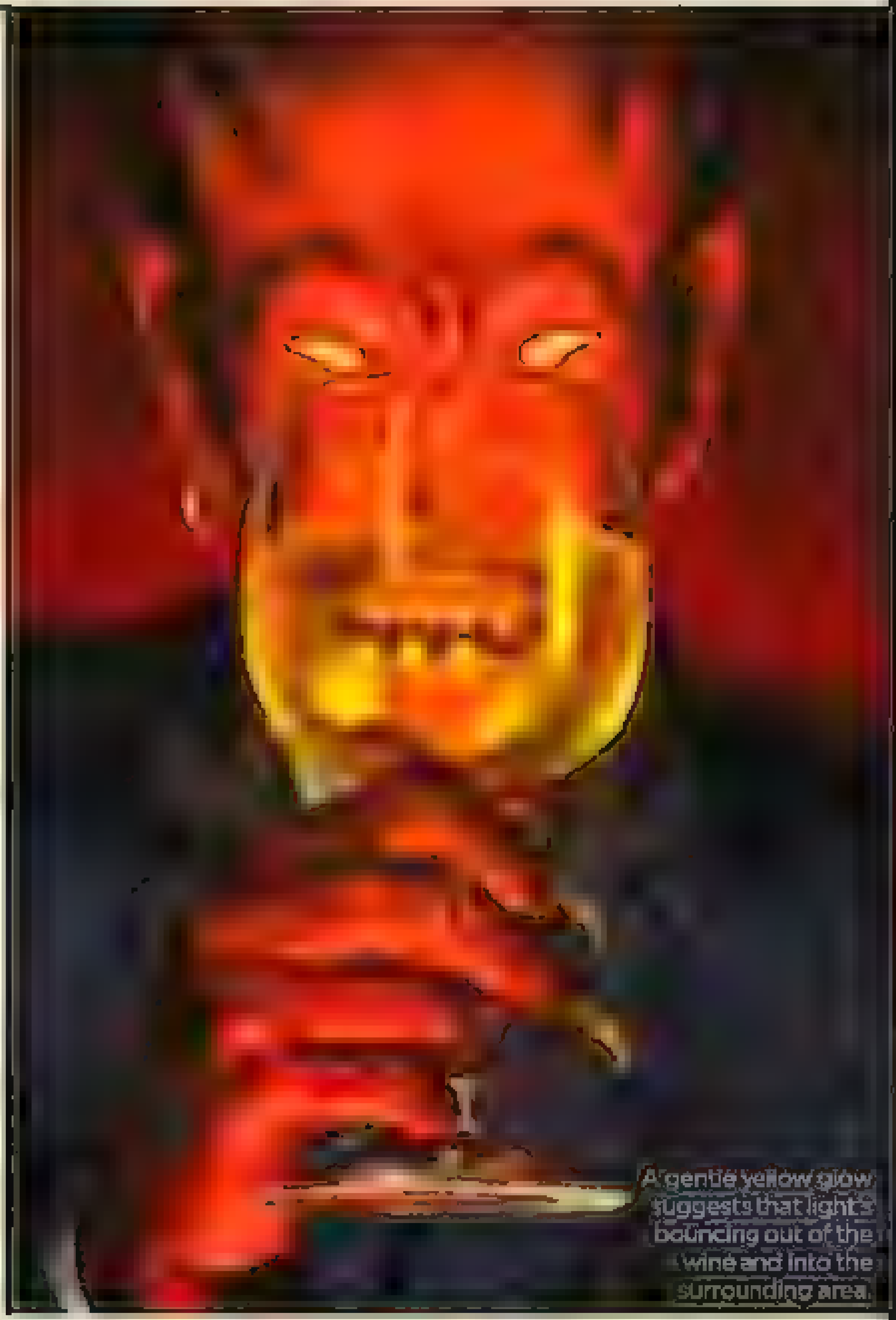
If you become lost try to get your hands on some reference material – glass bottles full of water are a great reference source for this task. Try to emphasise the movement of the creature, but remember not to paint it too rigidly, because after all, it doesn't have any bones.

Artist's secret

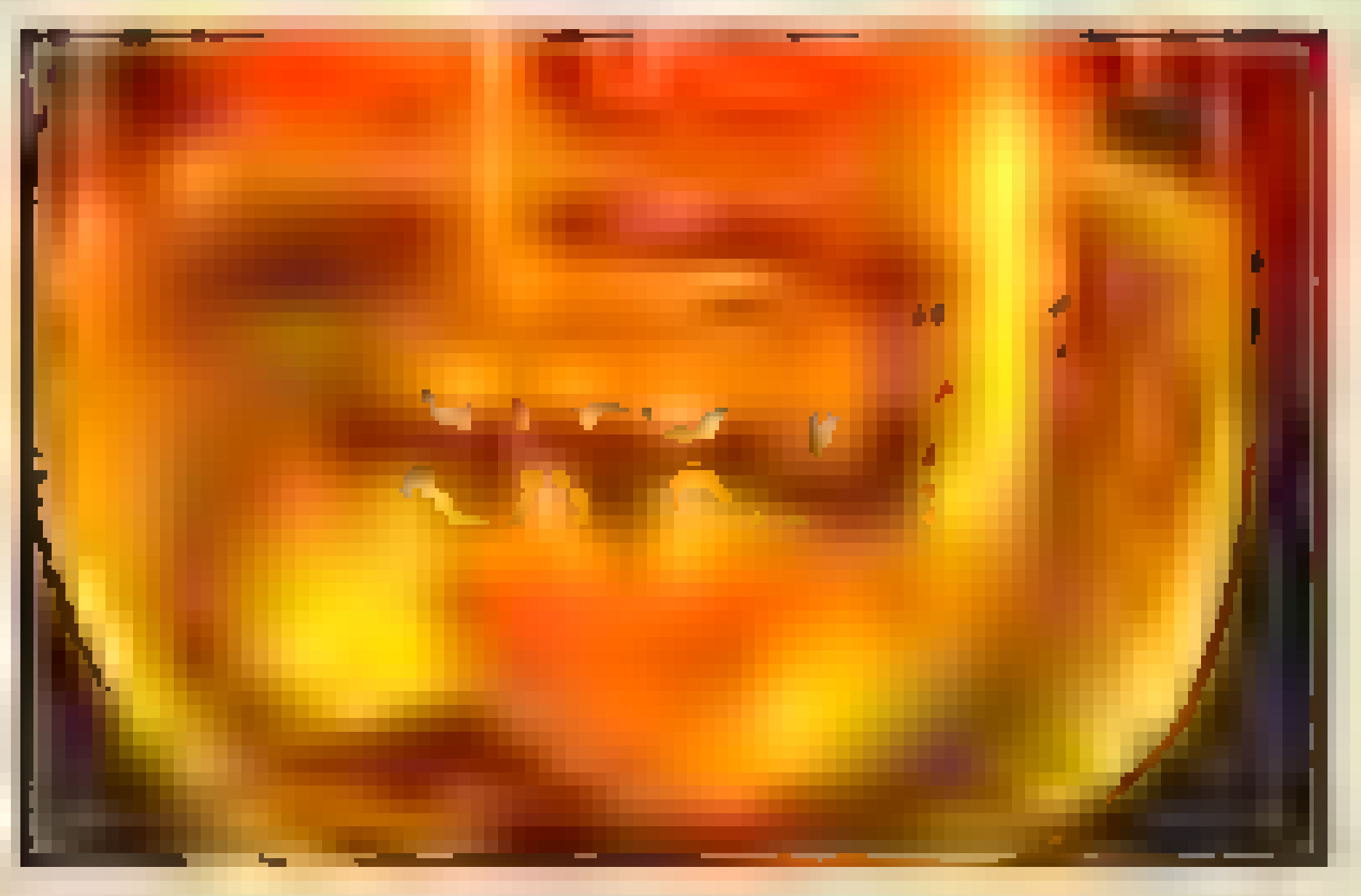
SPLASHING WATER EFFECT

[illegible]

Question
How do I paint a object interacting with glass?
Nina Moles, US



A gentle yellow glow suggests that light's bouncing out of the wine and into the surrounding area.



If you're looking up at the wine and can see the underside of the surface, remember that things will reflect on there, too.

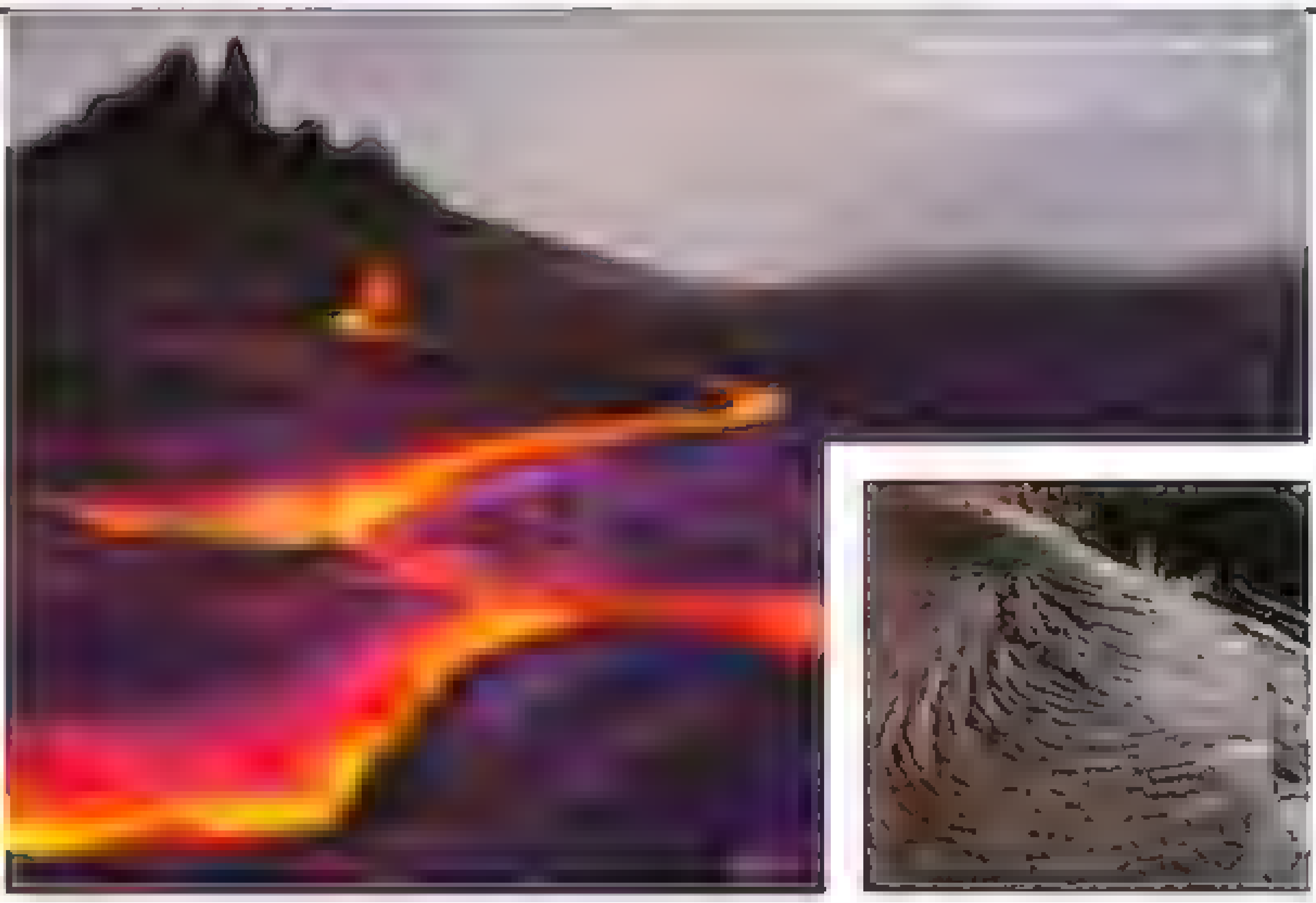
Answer
Jonathan replies

Well, first of all, you need to consider a context. If, for example, you want to paint a wine glass you need to consider the background, the reflection and refraction of light and colour.

So, what do you want to go behind our imagined transparent glass? If you can, making your own photo reference is ideal. It's hard to predict what glass and wine will do when they refract light. However, if you can't make your own photo reference, spend a little time finding some from the internet – there are plenty out there.

One amazing thing that a glass of wine will do is condense the light behind it. Remember, as you get closer to the outside edge of the glass, you're seeing light pushing through thicker glass with a much higher degree of curvature as you get closer to the edge. That's why in my painting you can see an image of the demon's ears inside the outside edges of the wine glass. Even though his ears fall outside the silhouette of the glass, the light is still being compressed.

Question
What's the best way to depict hot lava rock in my fantasy landscapes?
Cory Reed, US



Using good photo reference images for overlaying onto your painting will increase the realism and texture of your picture

Answer
Manon replies

Use reference. We have thousands of images to get inspiration from on the internet. Never be afraid to rely on reality, even when it's painting a fantastical landscape. It will only make your landscape look more believable.

With hot molten rock you have oranges and reds, bright pinks, and deep purples and blues in the reflection on the cooled, dark parts of the rock. First paint the base landscape you want to add lava to, using the reference. Build it up from blacks and dark greys. Use a low opacity brush with rough edges to build up the oranges and pinks. The hotter and more liquid the rock, the paler the colour will be, so bright yellows will fade out to orange and reds and pinks as they cool off and merge into the black rock.

Once I'm happy with the basic background I pull up some texture reference. I drag these into the painting and turn the layer to Overlay and fade it out by approximately 50 per cent. I then drop this layer down and keep painting over the top and add more cracks and character to the image until it's completed.

Question
Can you help me create a surreal-looking creature? My efforts look too conventional
Ella Arnason, Australia

Answer
Brynn replies

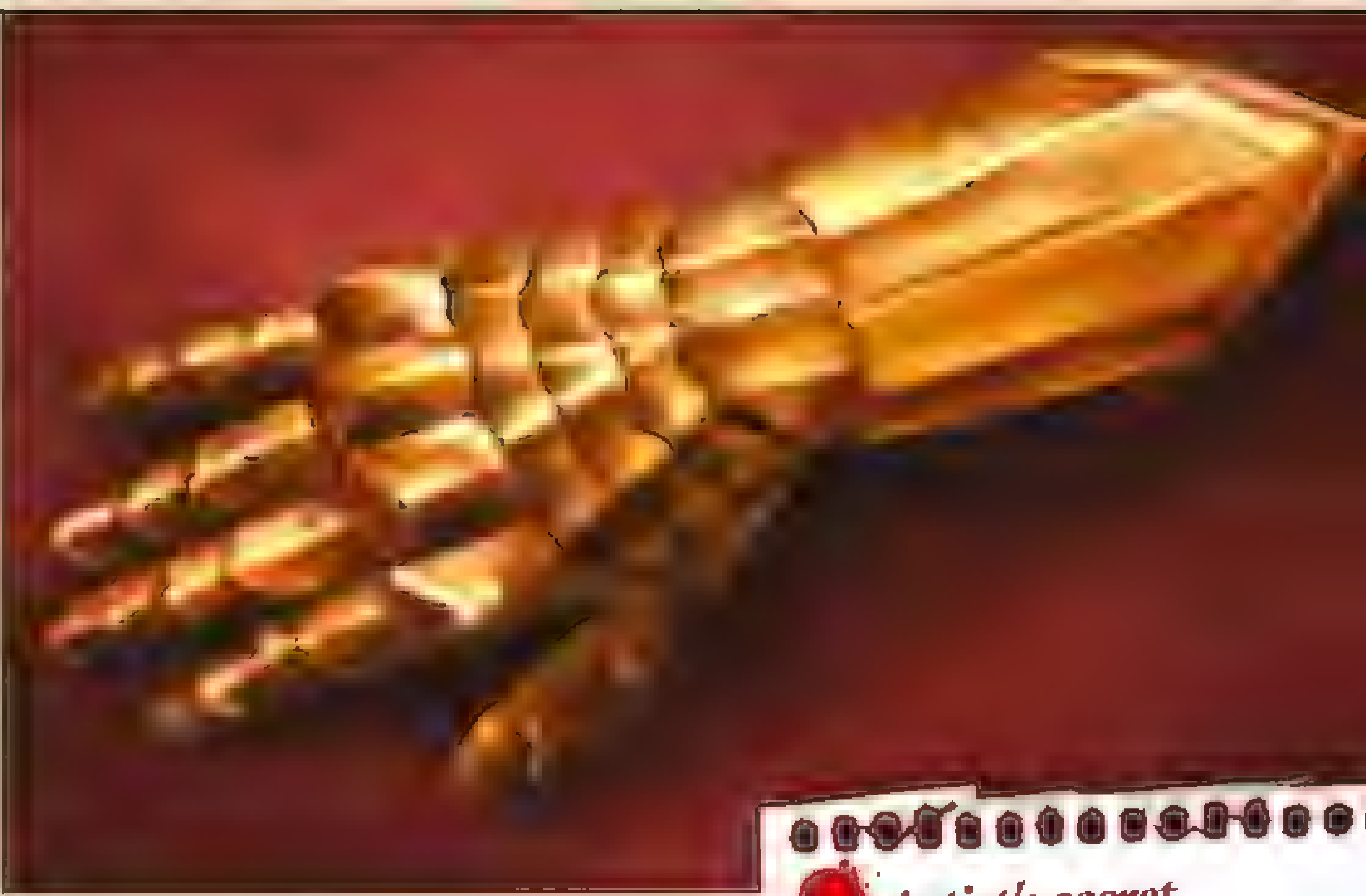
Incorporating plants into your creature design is a great way to generate interesting silhouettes, patterns and body plans for unusual, surreal creature designs. Looking through reference of plant life is sure to spawn some idea for what you'd like your creature to look like. Playing on the 'personality' of the plants in question is a great way to give your surreal flower creature personality, too.

When I begin, I sketch out a very rough creature, looking at flowers and animals for reference. As I sketch I try to think about how the flowers might fit together looking back and forth between the body plan I had chosen and the shape of the flowers. After I define my pencil drawing, I then lay in colour again, looking at flowers for inspiration to create unique colours and patterns. Something to consider when combining plants and animals into something new for surreal effect is how much plant you'd like to leave intact. The possibilities are endless. The creature doesn't have to have rigid legs like I have in my drawing, for example. You could always try roots, or even vines!

Question

What colours do I need to consider when attempting to paint metal realistically?

Rhidian O'Hara, Ireland



All metal has a surprising range of colour and value and gold is no exception. Don't get trapped into using only a few 'gold' colours

Answer

Lauren replies

To achieve a real look in your painted metal objects you need to be brave and step outside the perceived idea of what colours metals are. For example, fake gold in real life is far too yellow and brassy looking, and the same problem is usually the culprit in ugly painted gold: it's all in the palette range you use. One does not only use greys to paint silver or steel, so don't box yourself in when it comes to gold either. Although we associate the word 'golden' as a yellow tone, when it comes to rendering gold you need to venture beyond only yellow.

For painting convincing, rich golden metal you need keep your bright yellows contained to the lightest areas in the highlights and upper mid tones. Core highlights should be a light pink or blue, not a pastel yellow. The rest of the object should tilt more and more into red and brown the darker the value becomes. Use yellow ochres, sienna and rich oranges in the mid tones, with perhaps a touch of yellow green as an accent colour. For the shadows, pull in deep reds and umber tones. Keep most of these colours very saturated, especially in the darker tones.

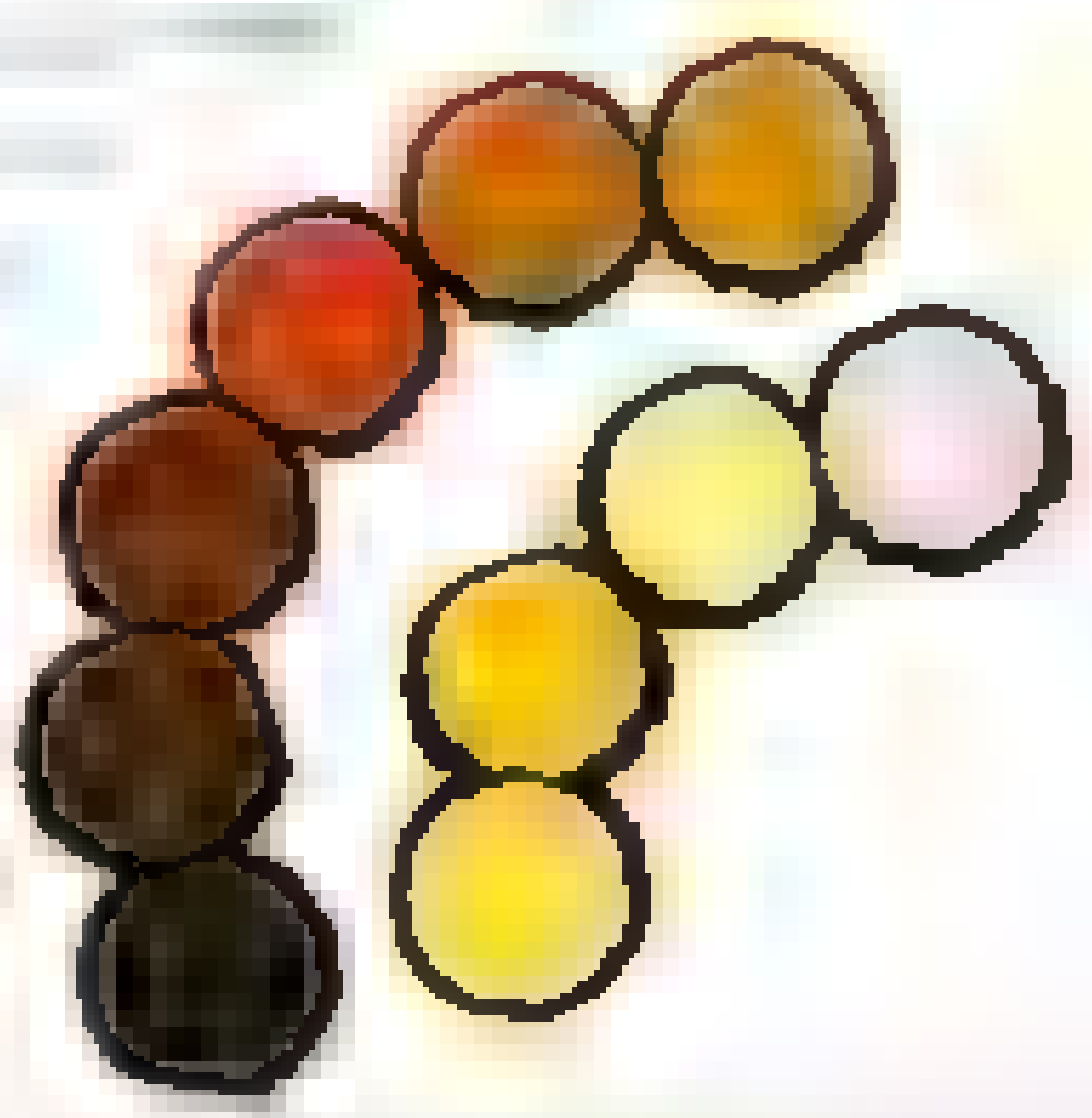
Metal is surprisingly complex, especially when it comes to segmented or curved objects such as armour. Look up references so that you can see how the light and shadows behave. Nailing the complexity of these reflections and hue shifts is another important way to make the metal look real.

In addition, remember to integrate some of your background colours or surround colours. Metal picks up reflections, and throwing in touches of these 'non-golden' colours will give your painted gold a touch of realism.

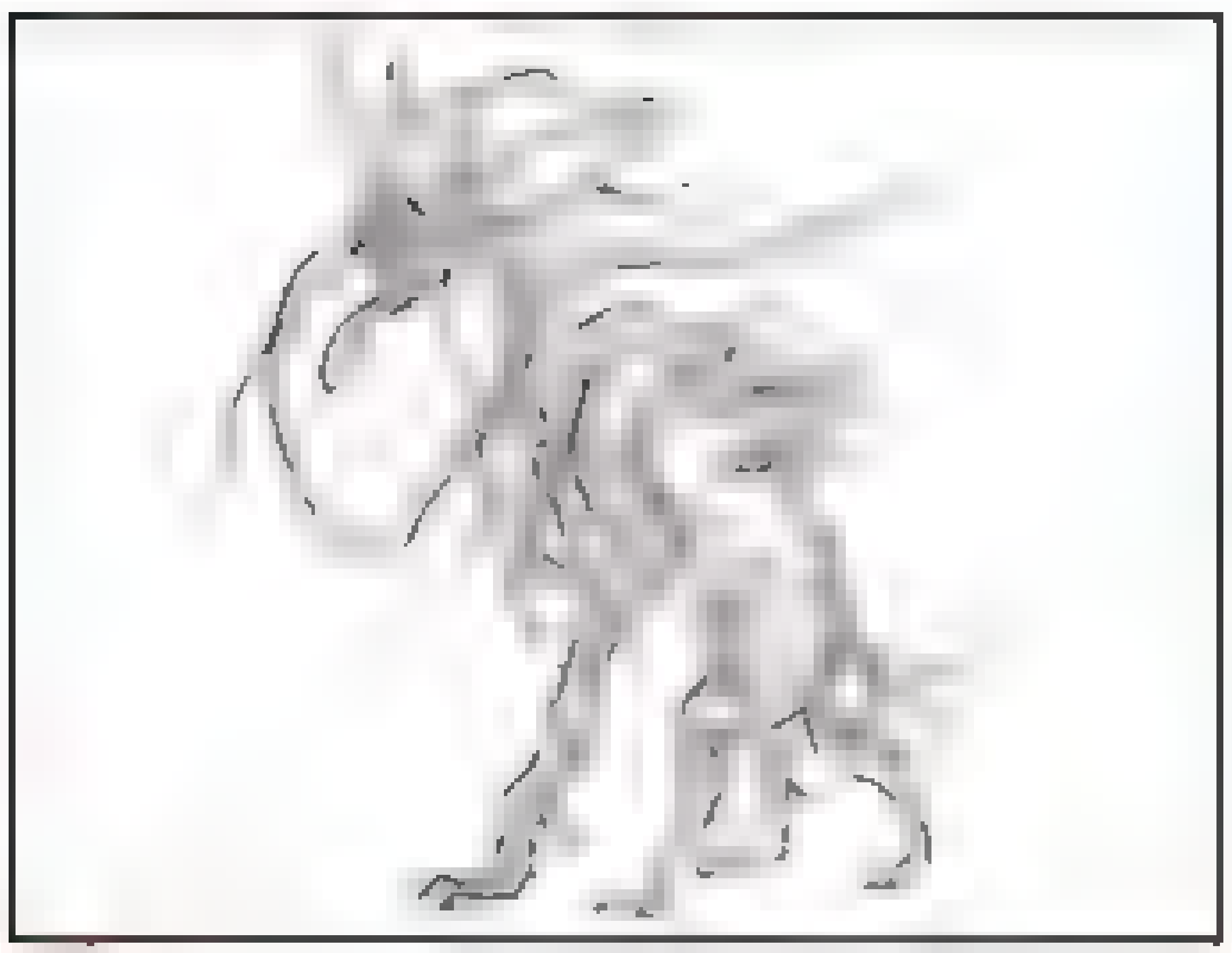
Artist's secret

LESS YELLOW IS MORE

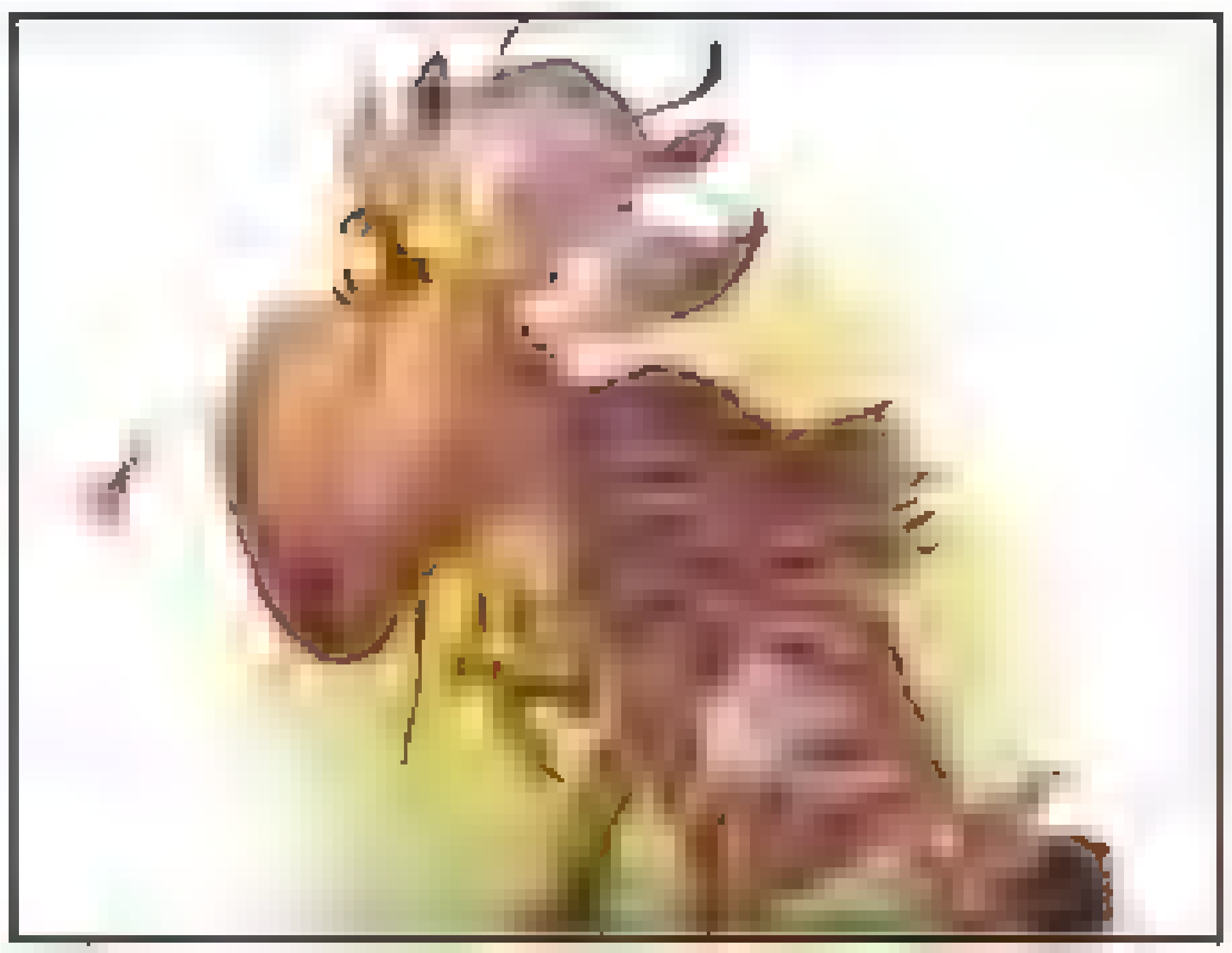
When painting [illegible]



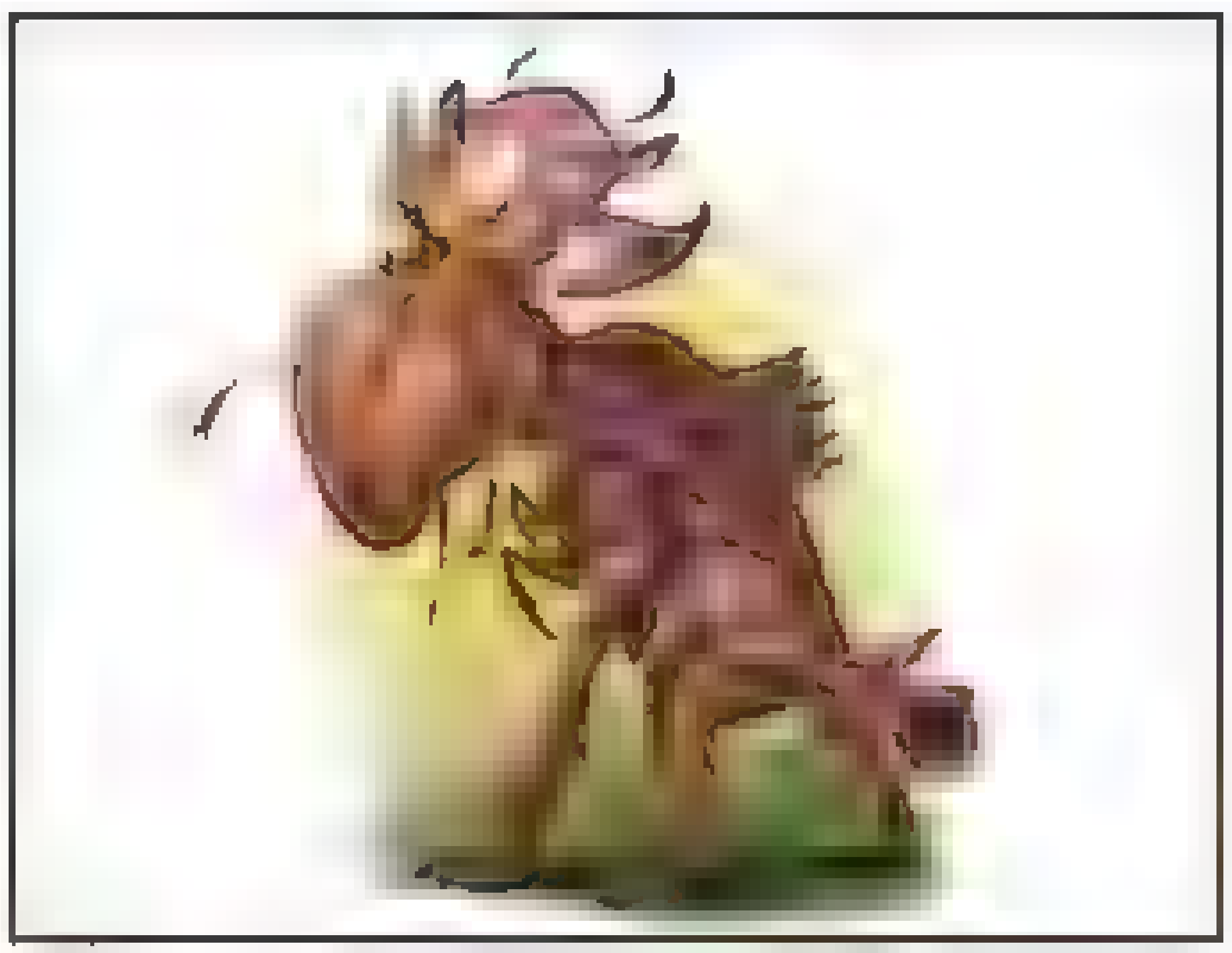
Step-by-step: Using plant references to create a surreal creature



① I begin with this sketch, matching the shapes from my plant and flower references with familiar 'creature' anatomy. As you can see, my initial effort is very rough, but that's because I'm only concerned with getting down the gesture and the overall shape of the creature.

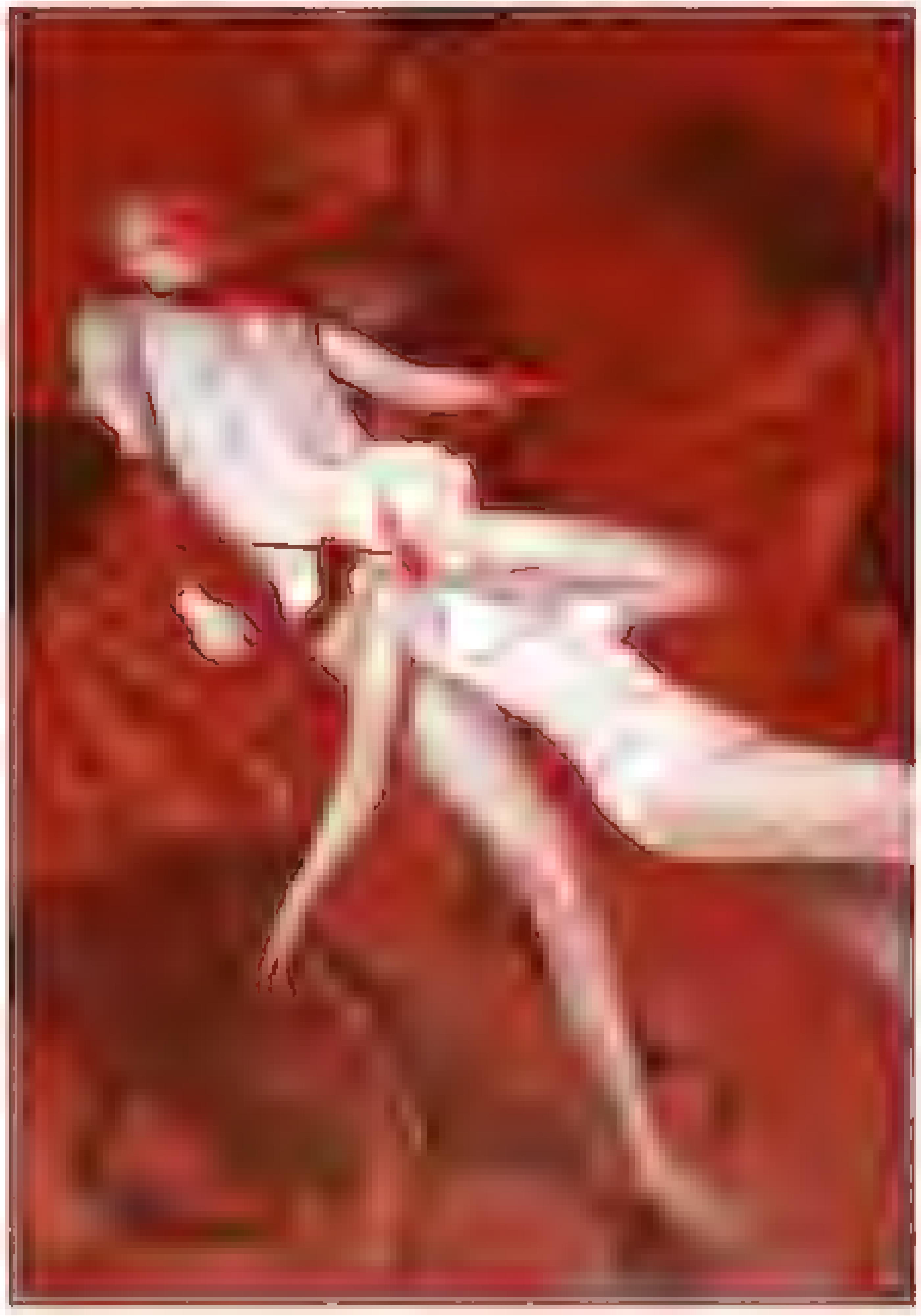


② I start to lay in the colour of the creature, reinforcing the concept that the body might be made of folded petals. I'm also keeping lots of texture while I paint so it doesn't look too flat, mindful that to sell the idea it needs to feel solid and well formed.



③ As I move into the final stages of the painting I begin to add shadows and shading to the creature's form. This will help keep petals and other plant-related details separated as well as adding depth. Painting on a separate layer also helps me edit as I work.

Question
How can I introduce a textured, atmospheric effect into my digital art?
Daryl Grant, Australia



Answer
Jeremy replies

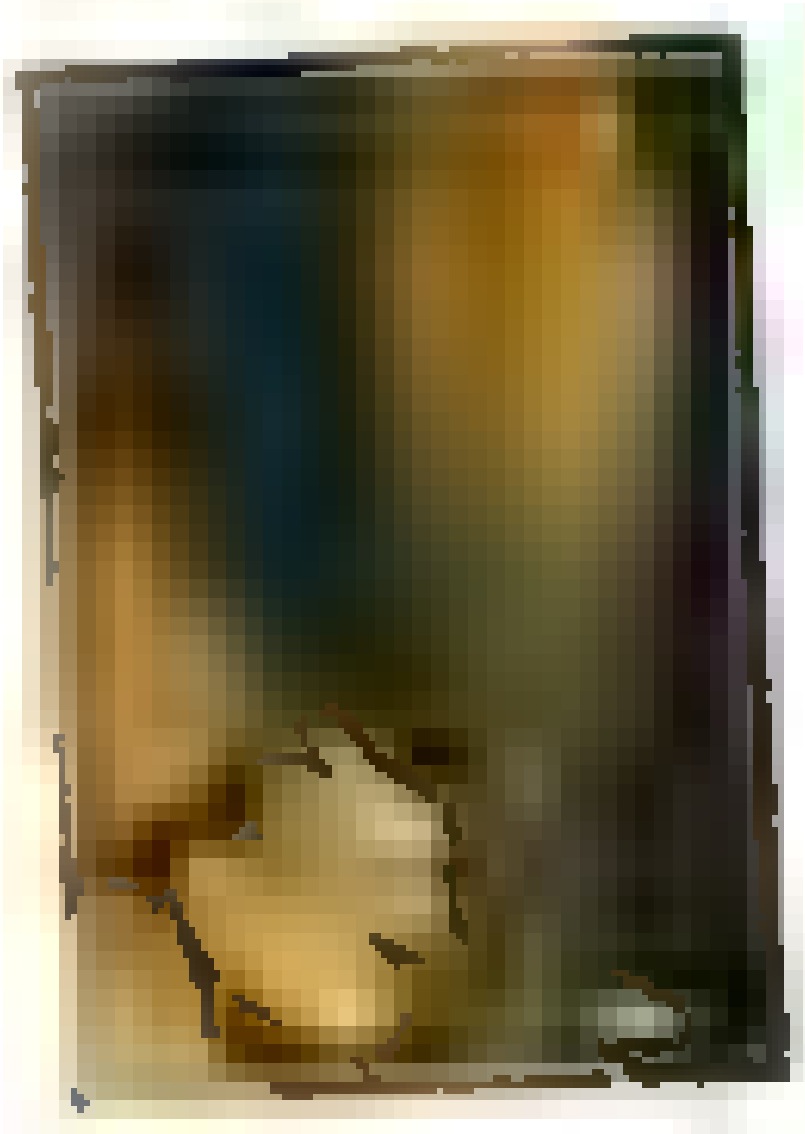
There are several ways to add natural looking textures into your digital work. I approach my textures in two ways: using a range of brush strokes techniques and overlaying scanned textures.

Most of the time, I use a hard round brush, with Shape and Opacity dynamics set to Pressure Sensitivity and a little Dual Brush action for added tooth in each stroke. I never use blurry brushes to render forms because they always just look too 'digital' for me. I layer brush strokes over the top of each other and colour pick the overlapped colours as I go using the Eye Dropper. This produces a nice gradient while still enabling the brush strokes to show through.

When it comes to scanned-in textures, you can literally use whatever you want, as long as it fits on your scanner. Mostly, I stick with traditional things such as old grainy papers, ink and watercolour splotches, charcoal rubs, messy acrylic brushstrokes, and so on. Once scanned in, you can go to town messing with layer modes and opacities. Even if you've done this a million times, this stage will always be experimental to some degree.

Sometimes, I like to invert the layer and set the layer mode to Screen for some lighter speckling and graininess. This can add a lot of atmosphere to a painting because you can develop pleasing effects that emulate smoke and dust.

Through the use of naturally sourced textures and overlaid brush strokes, I'm able to tone down any overly digital areas of my art

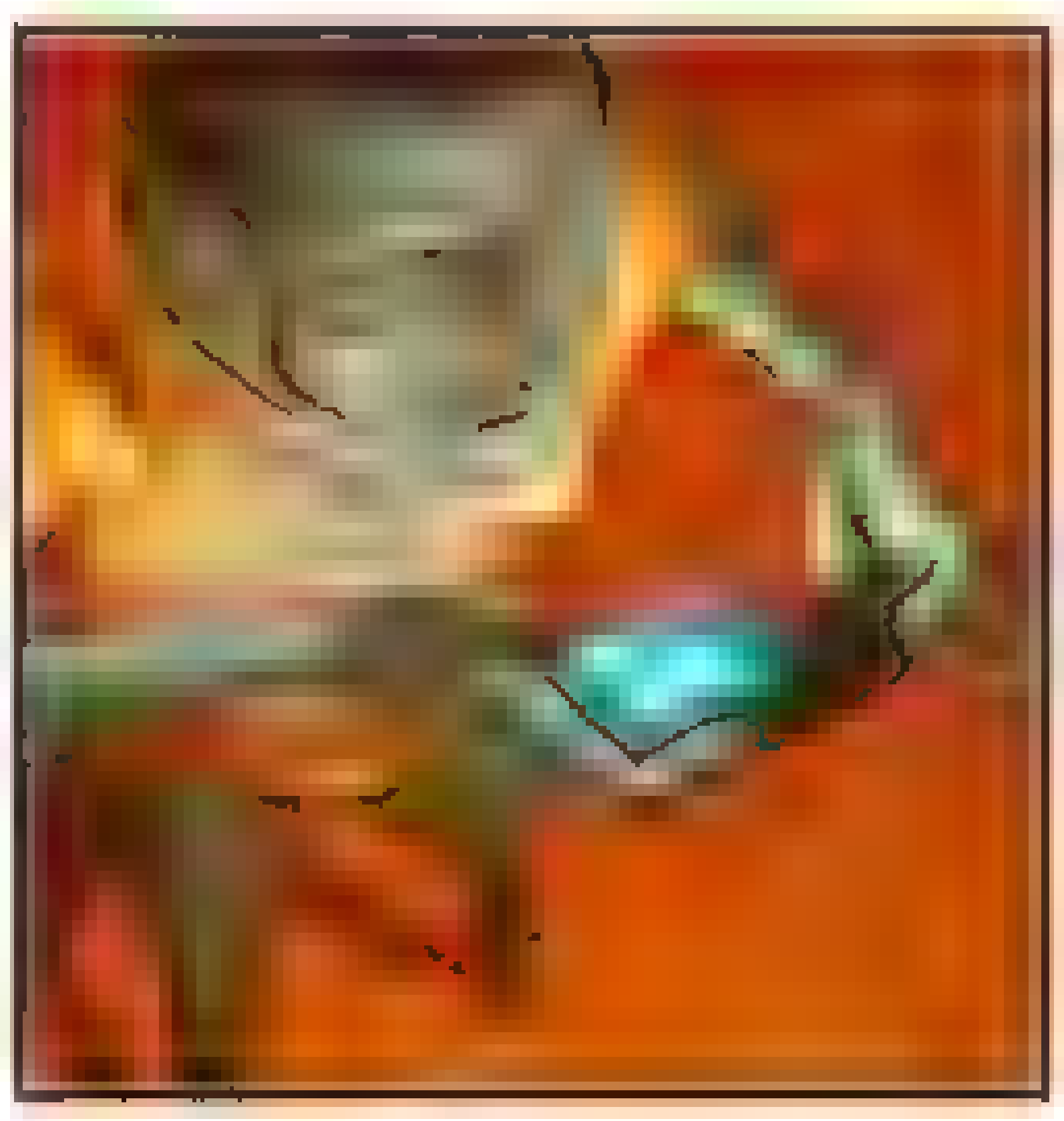


Artist's secret
STAYING CONSCIOUS OF YOUR EDGES

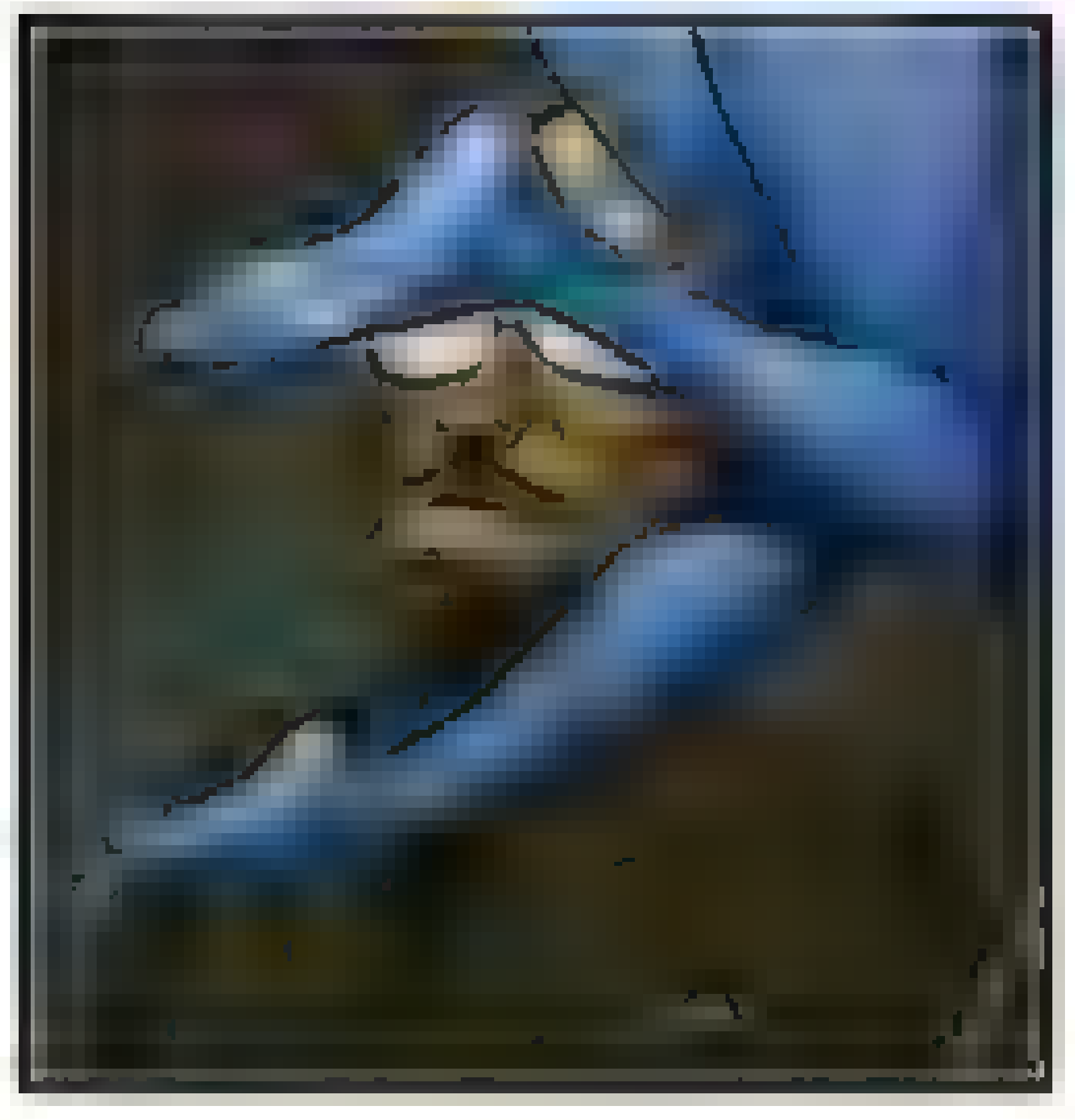
[illegible]

Step-by-step: Get more from your textures

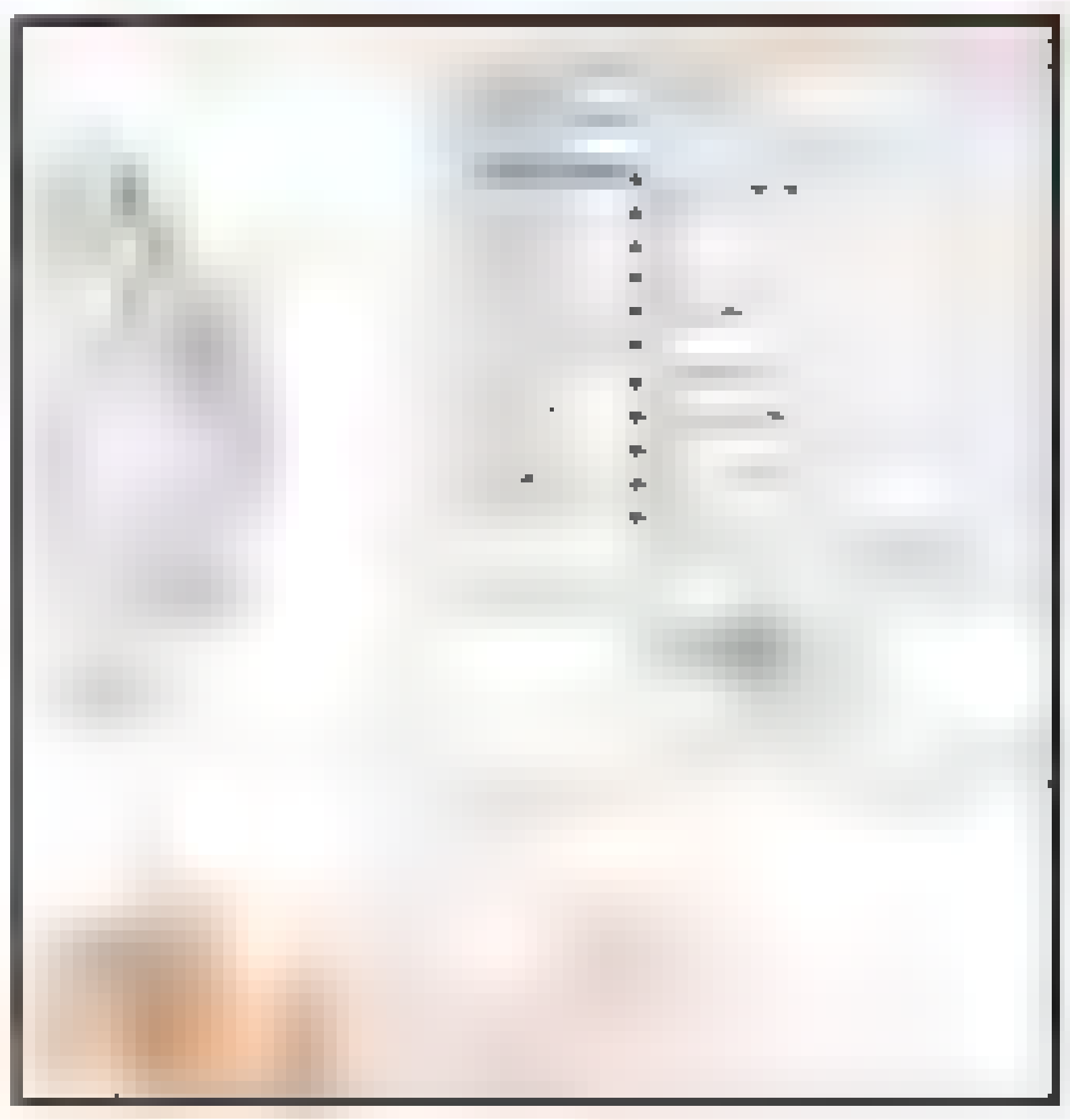
① When creating textures with natural media, ask yourself whether it's going to lay on top of the image as a faux surface texture, or will it be used as a special effect, like smoke? Play with wet and dry application of ink, use vine and compressed charcoal for different levels of intensity, and go wild with some acrylic paint. Organise them into a collection for use in future pieces.



② Overlaying scanned textures is one of the last stages of a painting for me. Once you've placed the scan over your image, explore all the layer modes to see what looks good. Change the layer's Hue/Saturation so it won't just be black and white, and the layer opacity to add believability to the texture. I end up with 10 or so texture layers, but keep them fairly subtle.

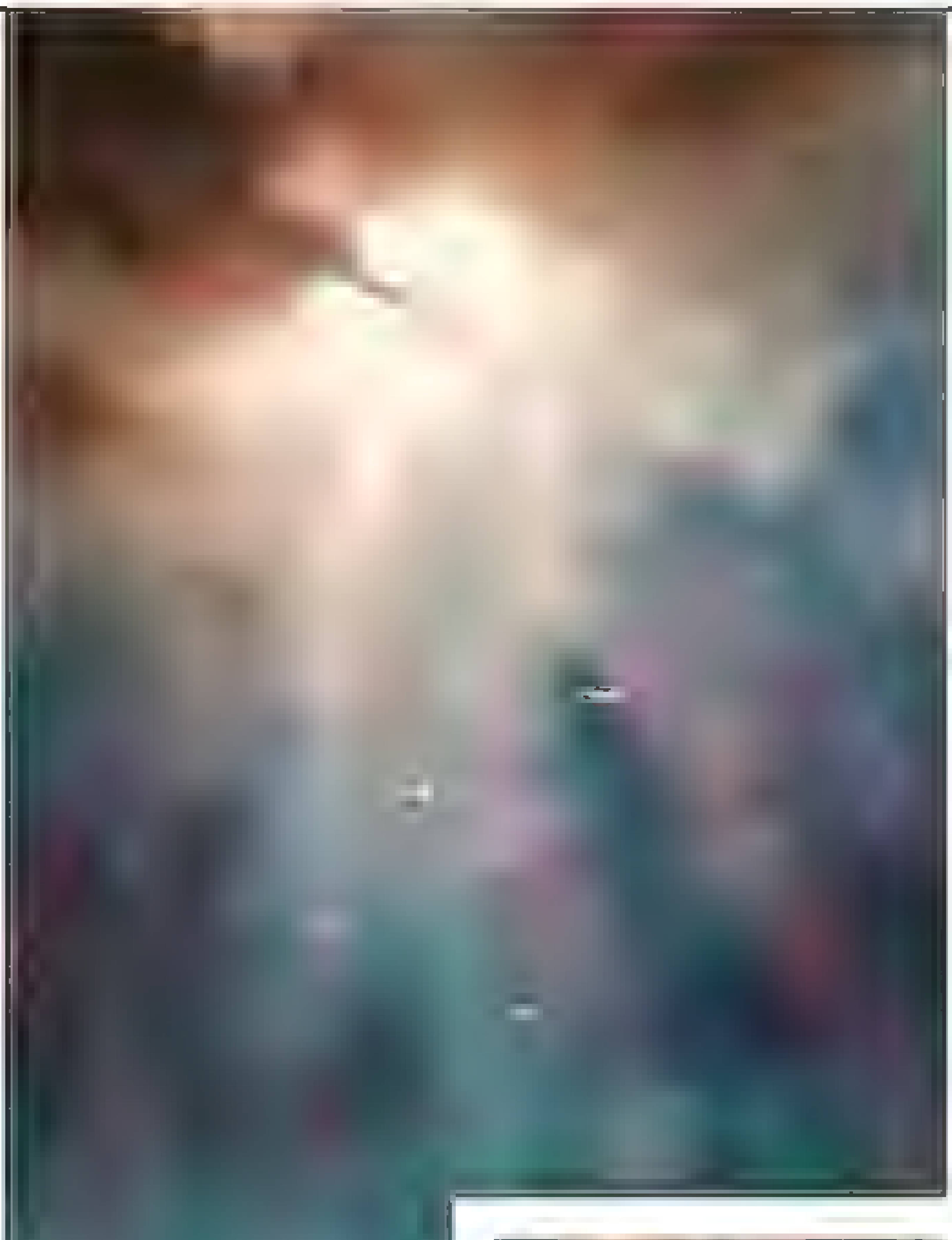


③ If you want to produce an interesting effect in which the texture is lighter than your image, select the texture layer and click Image>Adjustments>Invert. This will turn your scan into a negative. Change the layer mode to Screen or Color/Linear Dodge. Adjust Levels and Opacity to your liking. This can give you an effect of smoke or dust, as well as enhance the faux surface texture.



④ You can make your own brushes out of textures. Select a square portion of a scan with the Marquee tool, making sure the texture doesn't touch the edges of the selection box. Go to Edit>Define Brush Preset. This will add your selection to your brush palette. Select the brush and open your Brush Presets to adjust Shape Dynamics, Scattering and so on.

Question
How do I depict volumetric atmospheric lighting or 'god rays'?
Linnea Zumsteg, US

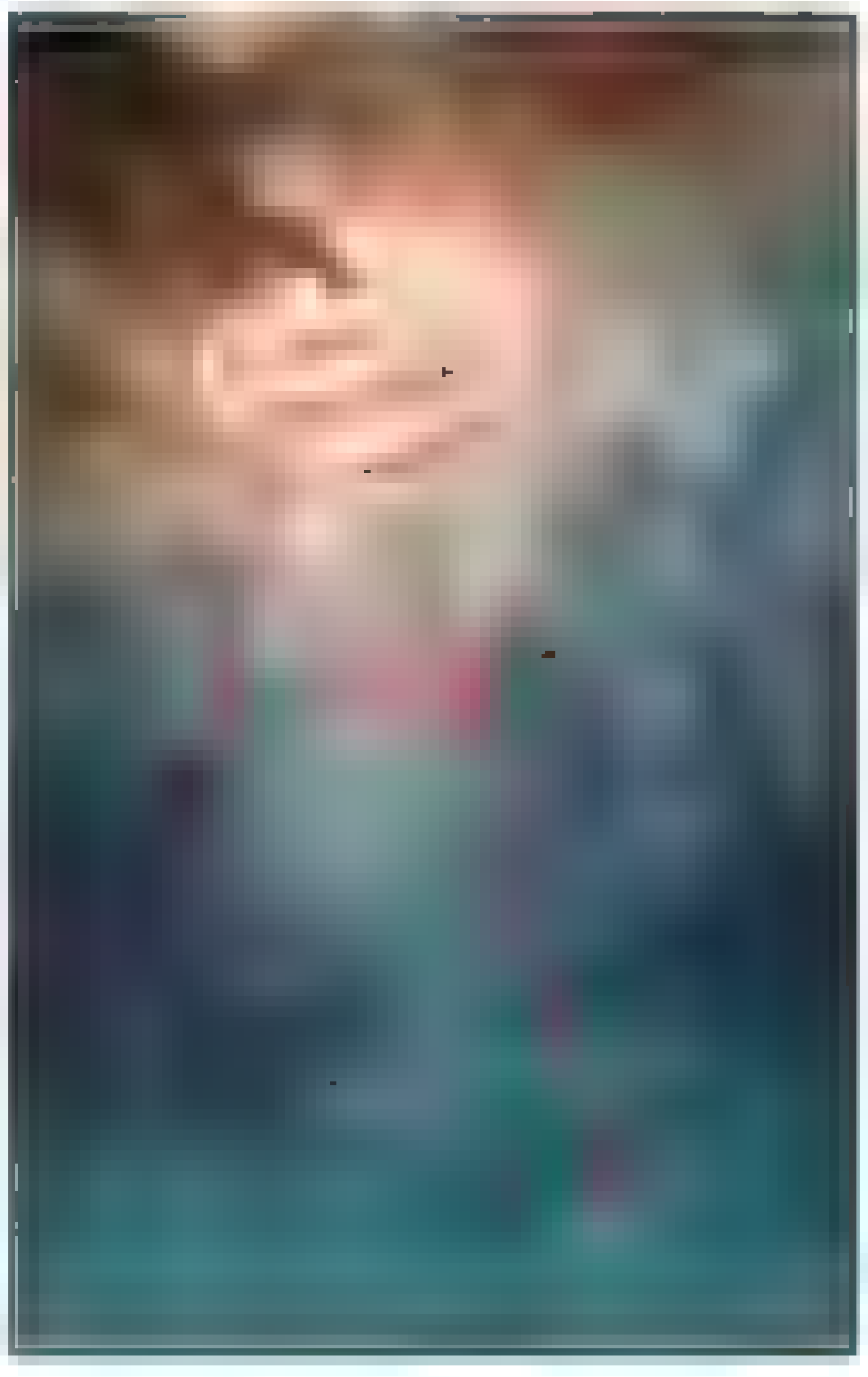


Answer
Mélanie replies

Crepuscular rays to give them their real name, are a great way to add atmosphere to an outdoors scene. This technique can be used for interiors too, as long as you have a strong light source

The first thing is to determine the light source. For my painting I choose to have it in the top left corner of the composition. Next I pick the same colour as the basic light a very pale yellow and on another layer with a basic round brush, with very soft edges, I paint a few straight, huge lines coming from the light source I erase some parts and blur the whole thing with Motion Blur, because the rays must look soft and diffuse

Next I create some new straight lines on a separate layer set to Screen or Color Dodge mode. This brings some pleasing colour variation to the scene. You can develop this technique further by toying around with other Layer modes. Sometimes you can produce some nice surprises in your art, especially when you're playing with the light



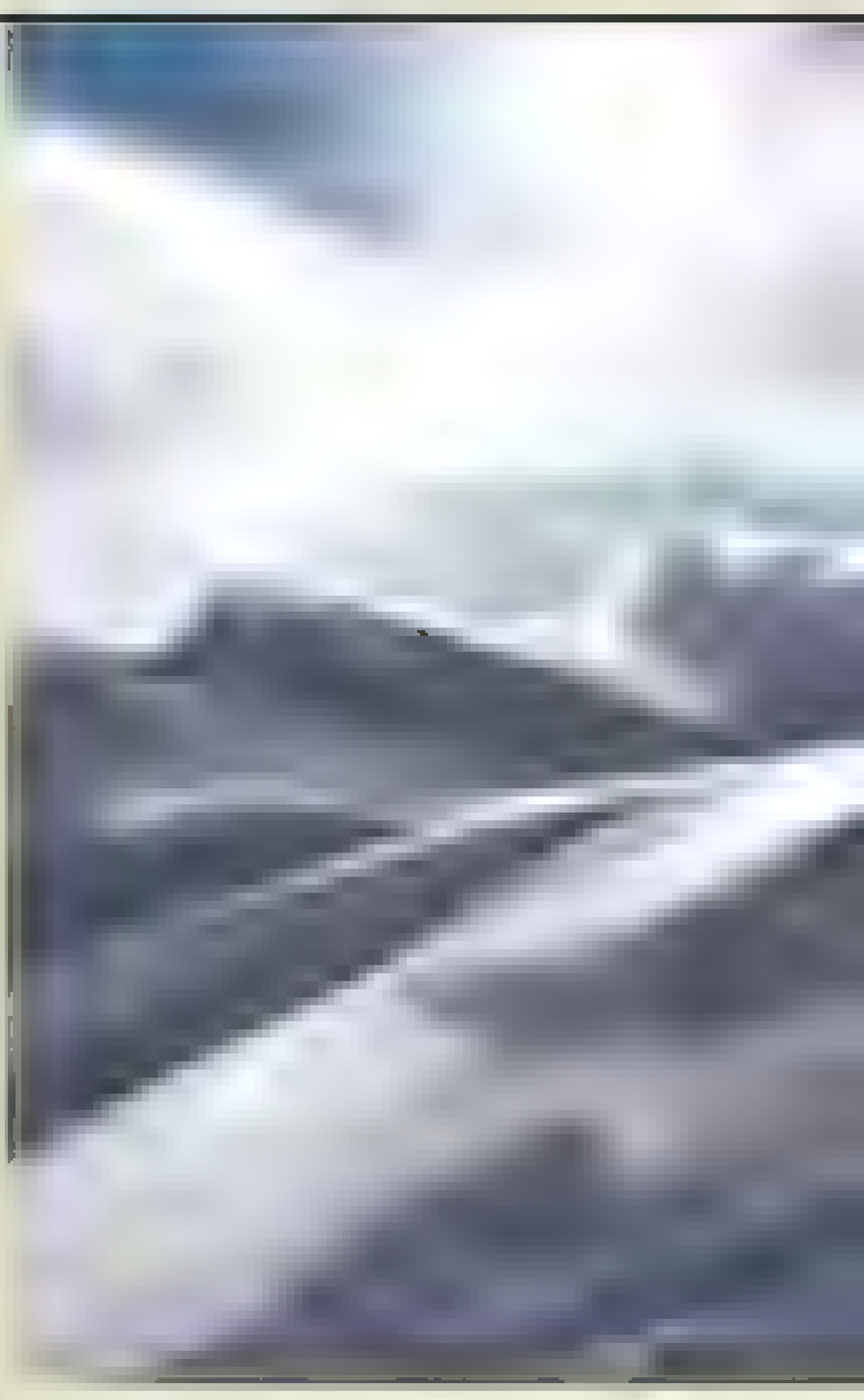
After adding the rays, the image looks more mystical and magic I usually add a lot of effects by playing around with the Layer modes to create a fantastic light

Question
What tips can you give me for painting a snowy scene?
Holly Bishop, England

Answer
Manon replies

When painting snow, don't use any black at all Because snow's white and made up of tiny crystals, it's incredibly reflective and the shadows in snow can be particularly beautiful sometimes they can look purple and cornflower blue. Unless, of course, there's an overcast light. Under these circumstances your snow should appear blander, with much less contrast from white to blue and more grey

Remember that the further in the distance any object is, the more desaturated the colours will become. Keep the brushstrokes loose and painterly don't try to get too over detailed. Keep the shadows clean by using a mid blue on a Multiply layer at a low opacity to build up the shadows. The rule remains, however: never use blacks



I have only used two or three shades to render this snow scene. The light reflected off the snow and the shadows mirror the blues of the sky

Question
What's the best way to paint a denim effect?
Caren Goss, US

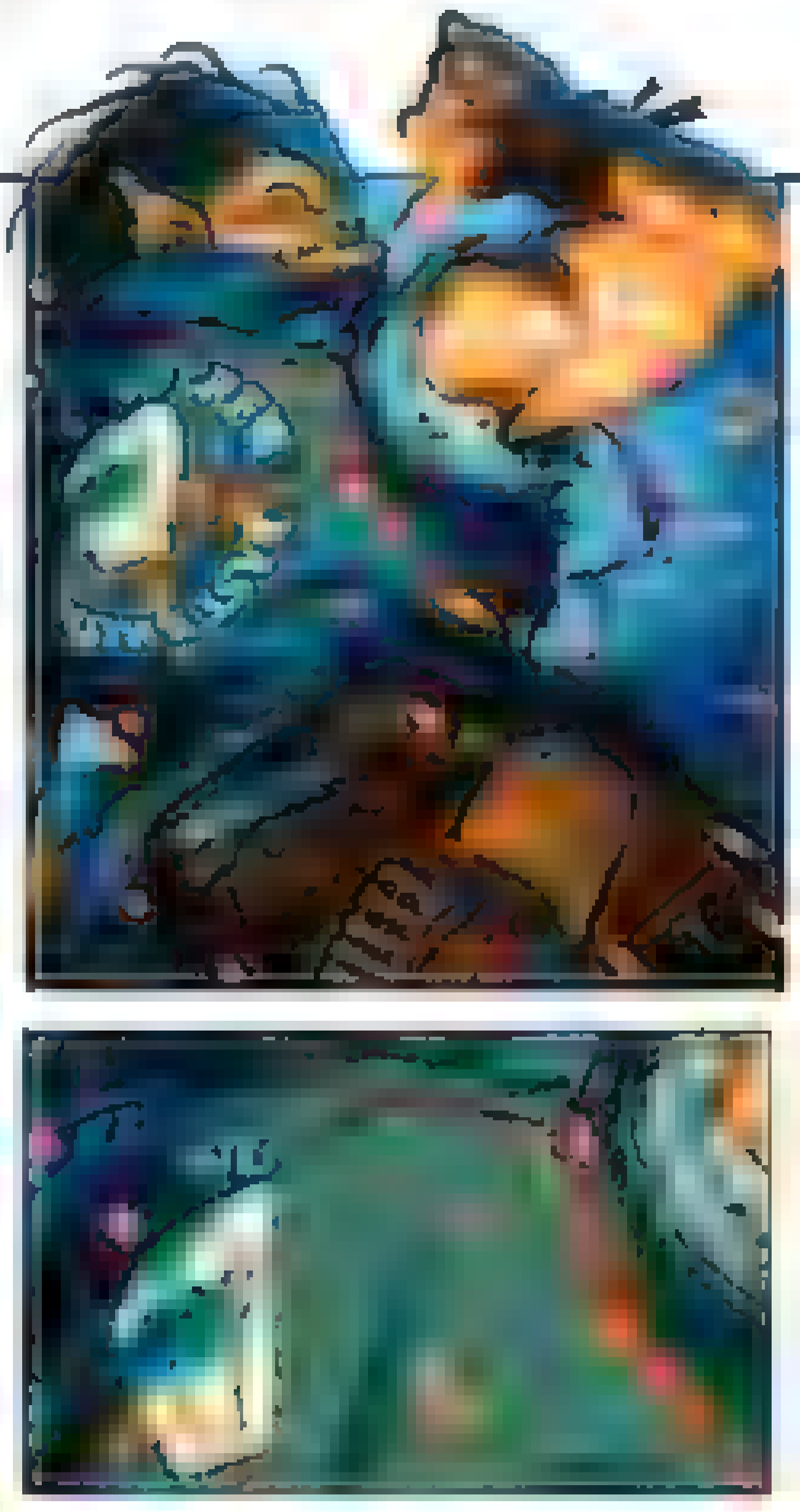
Answer
Jonathan replies

There are three elements that are key to rendering denim. shape, texture and the placement and style of the seams

Take a look at a denim jacket or a pair of jeans and you'll see denim is such a robust fabric (especially when it's brand new) that it tends to fold and crease differently to other fabrics. Try making folds more geometric and tight around seams Texture can be achieved through making a repeating texture swatch It's easy enough to make one by photographing your own jeans

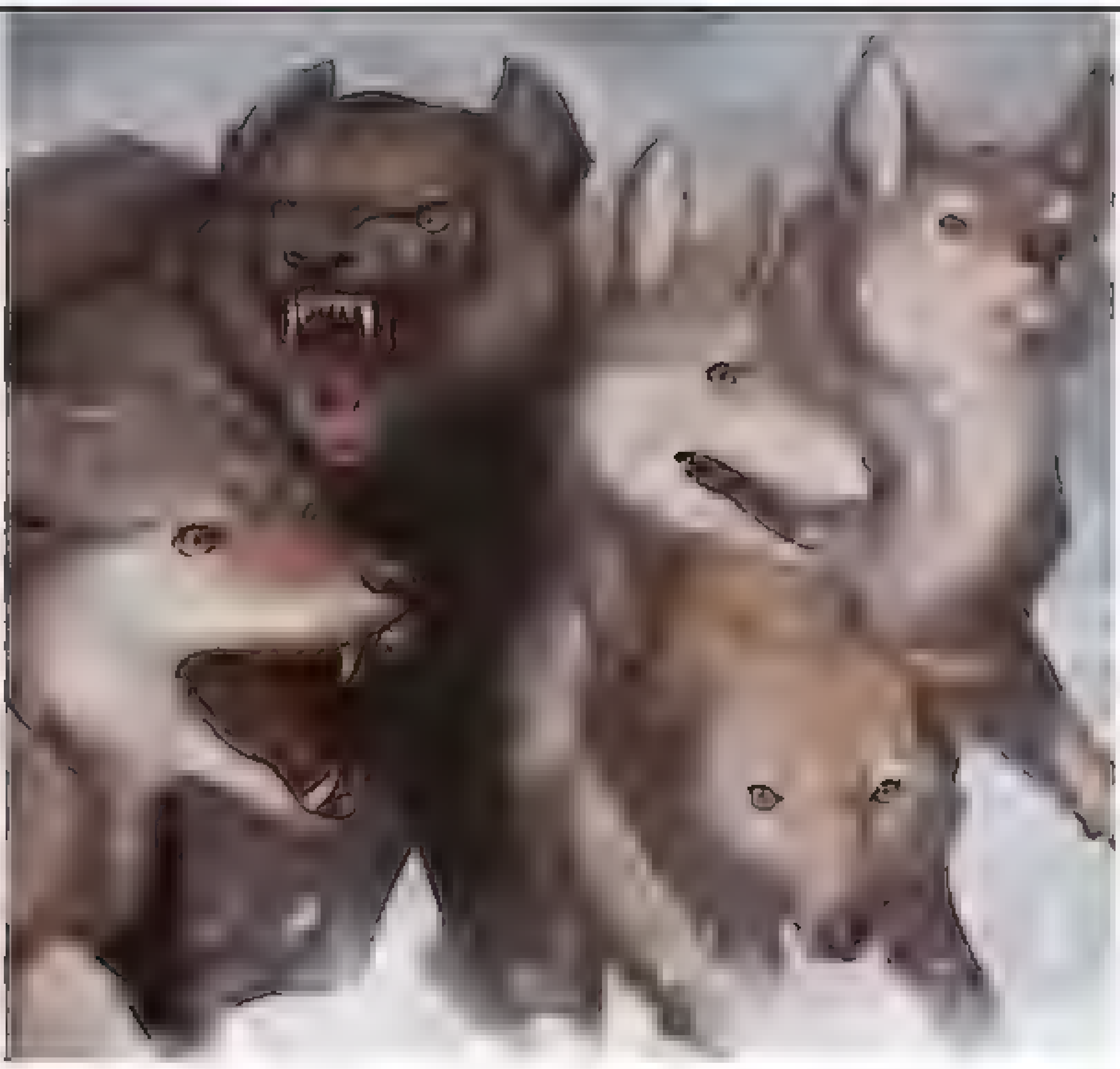
The style of stitching on denim garments is consistent. It's almost always double stitched hems, in some kind of contrasting colour that shows up nicely against the blue

To produce an authentic denim look, add in worn edges and patches Again, looking at real jeans you'll notice that denim reverts to its constituent parts (overlapping strands of blue and white thread) the more it breaks down



The decal on the back of the jacket adds visual interest and also helps break up my repeating texture, preventing the eye from becoming bored

Question
What advice do you have for giving my animals emotions and expressions?
Karla Endicot, Wales


Each wolf is showing a different emotion using its ears, mouth and eyes. Paying attention to these signifiers will help create believable animal emotion.

Answer
Brynn replies

Adding recognisable emotion to your animal drawings can be difficult, but taking the time to observe your subject will help tremendously. Tracking down suitable reference images is always a good idea for any art project, but in this case it's pretty much an essential stage. Educate yourself on how your animal communicates with other animals. We know animals have feelings, but they might express them differently than a human would. However, some things carry over from species to species.

I've drawn and painted a few wolves with different expressions to show the range that canines are capable of. When starting this piece I looked through photos of wolves as well as a few videos to observe how they use their faces and bodies to communicate. So much of animal and our own expression is portrayed through the whole body. Canines, for example, use their ears, tails and posture to communicate feelings toward one another.

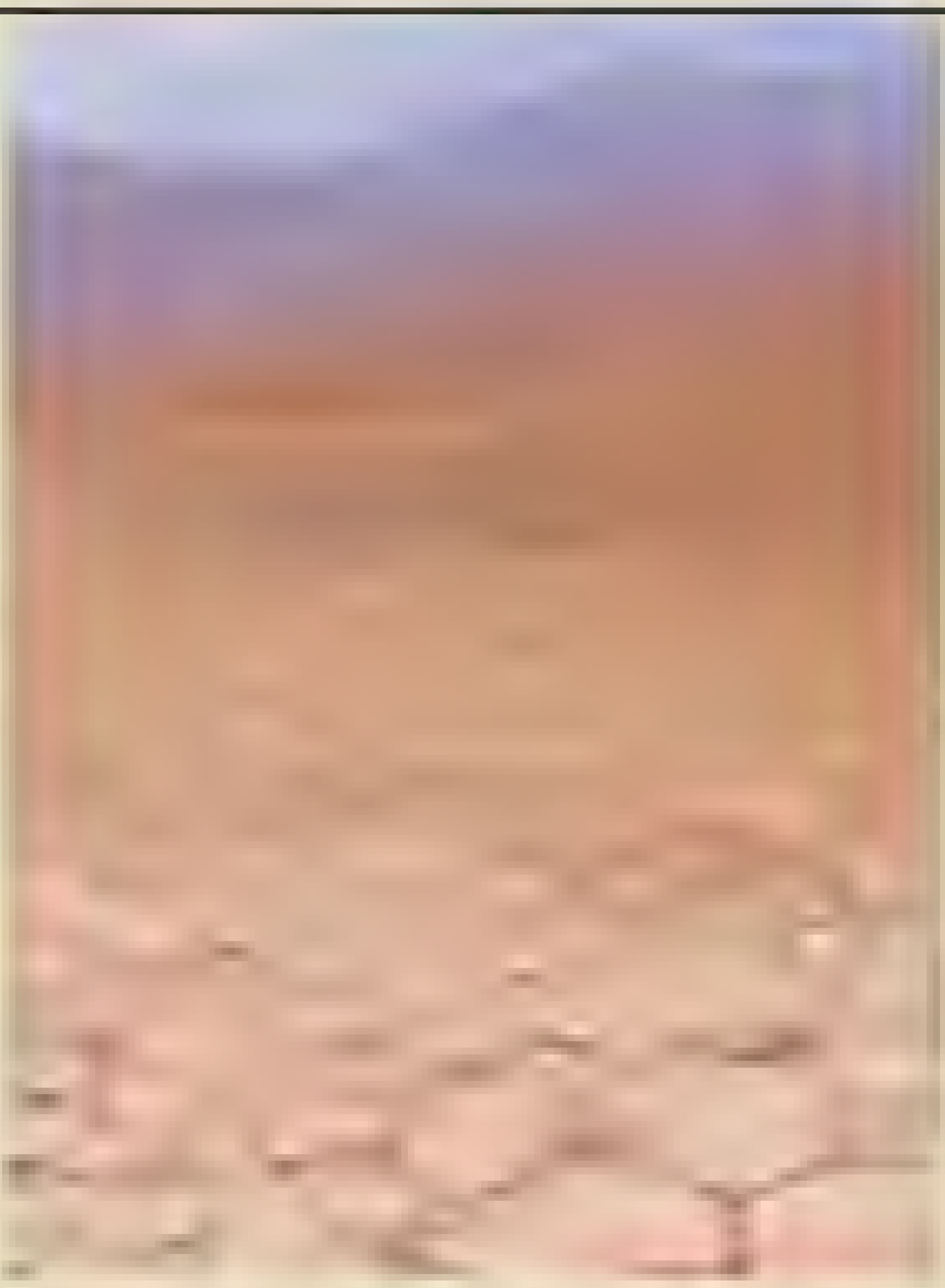
You can take these visual cues and use them to your advantage when introducing emotion to your creatures. Combine that with what you know about your own expression and you can begin painting. Studying real animals will also help with imaginary creatures and the emotions that you might want them to convey.

By comparing these three wolves, you can see the movements of the ears, eye-shape and mouths convey anger, contentment and panic

Artist's secret
LOOK AT YOURSELF

[illegible]

Question
Is there an easy way to paint cracked, dry dirt?
Simon Constable, England

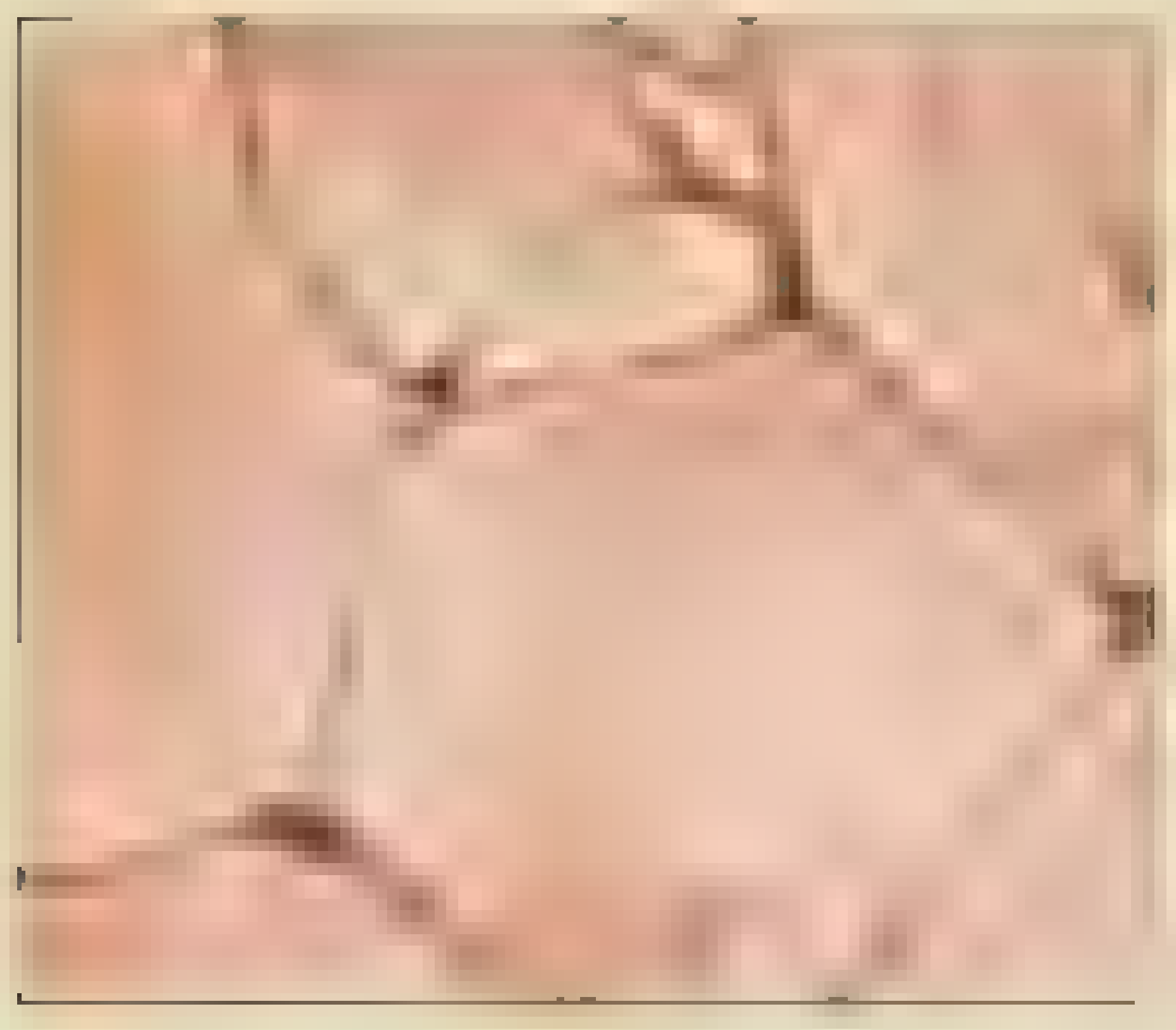

Use textured brushes and the Perspective tool to achieve a believable surface that feels dry and recedes into the distance

Answer
Lauren replies

This is one of those things you don't want to over think. Simplify the cracks into basic shadows and highlights, and you'll be able to create the effect of cracks easily.

When painting dirt or sand, I like to fall back on brushes that incorporate a scrambled or rough texture. Just by laying down a basic gradient with a brush like that, you're left with a fantastic, dry-feeling surface that has a lot of detail. Be sure to focus on this surface before you start painting in the cracks – take the time to get the colours, light, and values right before proceeding.

Now, using Photoshop, paint a flat cracked pattern on a separate document, then import it into your image and use the Edit>Transform>Perspective tool to make it lay across the surface. You may need to scale it a bit. This gives you an excellent, convincing base to then do touch-up work on, deepening the shadows and painting in some highlights on the edges of the cracks to sell the final image.


The illusion of cracks is easy to achieve with the use of simple shadows and highlights on top of a sandy base

Next month
ON SALE: **9 December**
How to paint sexy lips

Question
How do I paint an impressive, detailed dwarf's beard?
Petra Holden, US

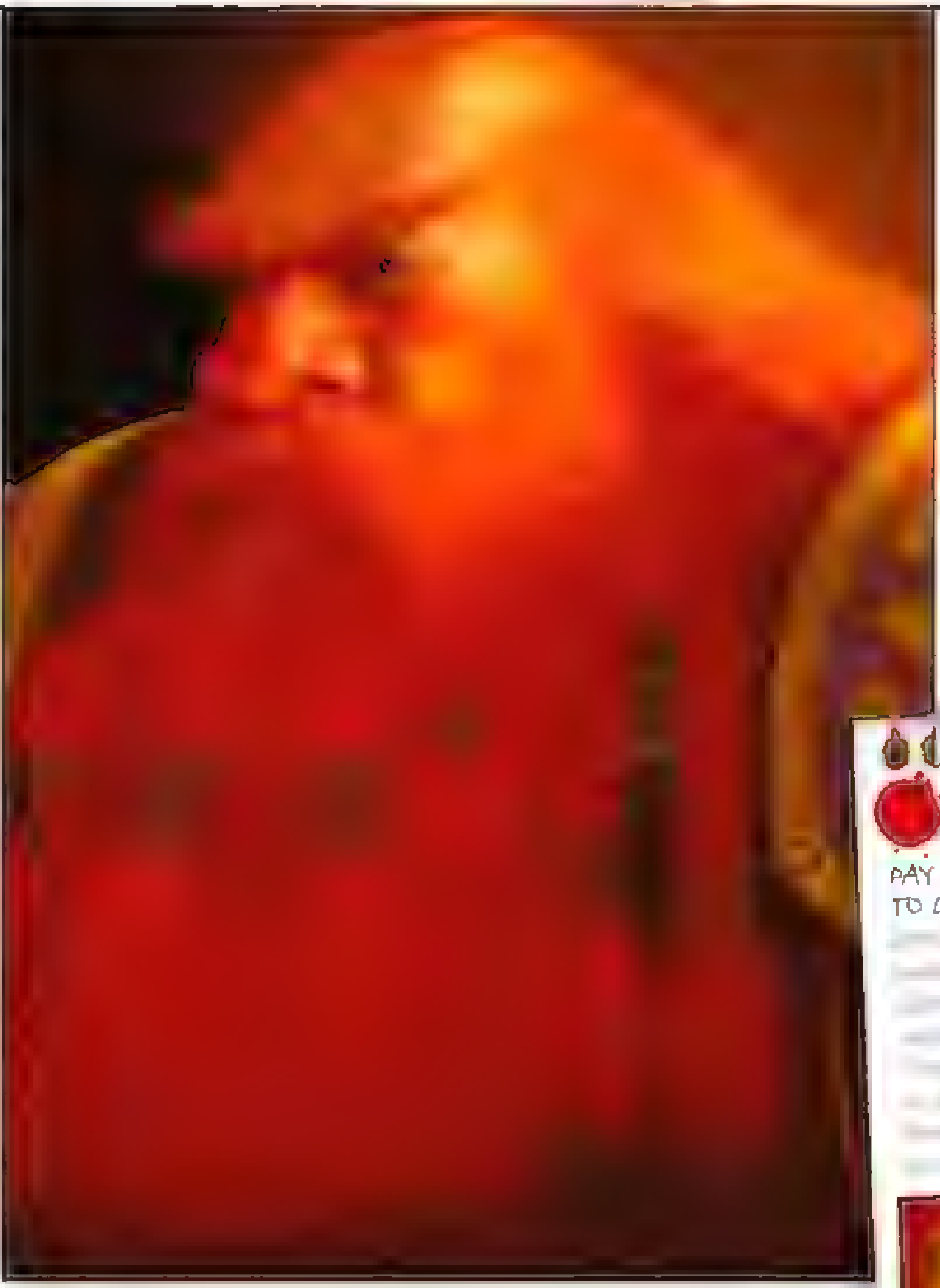
Answer
Paco replies

Traditionally, in fantasy, dwarfs are very proud of their facial hair, so when it comes to painting a dwarf's beard you have to reflect that pride. I mean, a respectable dwarf would not have a dirty and tangled beard. You'll need to paint him with a fancy facial hairstyle worthy of the Dwarven race.

I'd say that the most typical beard ornaments are braids and pigtails collected with metal rings or jewellery – remember that dwarfs are crafty goldsmiths! Of course, when it comes to fantasy there are no rules, so you can let your imagination fly freely and design any kind of beard decoration. Just try to reflect the personality of the beard's owner.

With the process of painting the hair, try to understand the basic shape of the beard you're rendering. The first step to painting a beard is to forget about the individual hairs and to paint it like a solid object. Pay attention to the volume, the highlights and the shadows. Don't start messing with the 'hair texture' until you have a solid base in place for the beard.

There are many ways to paint hair. A dwarf's beard doesn't need to be painted hair by hair, but because a large portion of a dwarf's body is taken up by his beard, you may want to go for a detailed and eye-catching final look. As such, the 'hair by hair' texture can be a pretty interesting choice. Just be careful not to lose the volume that you previously created.



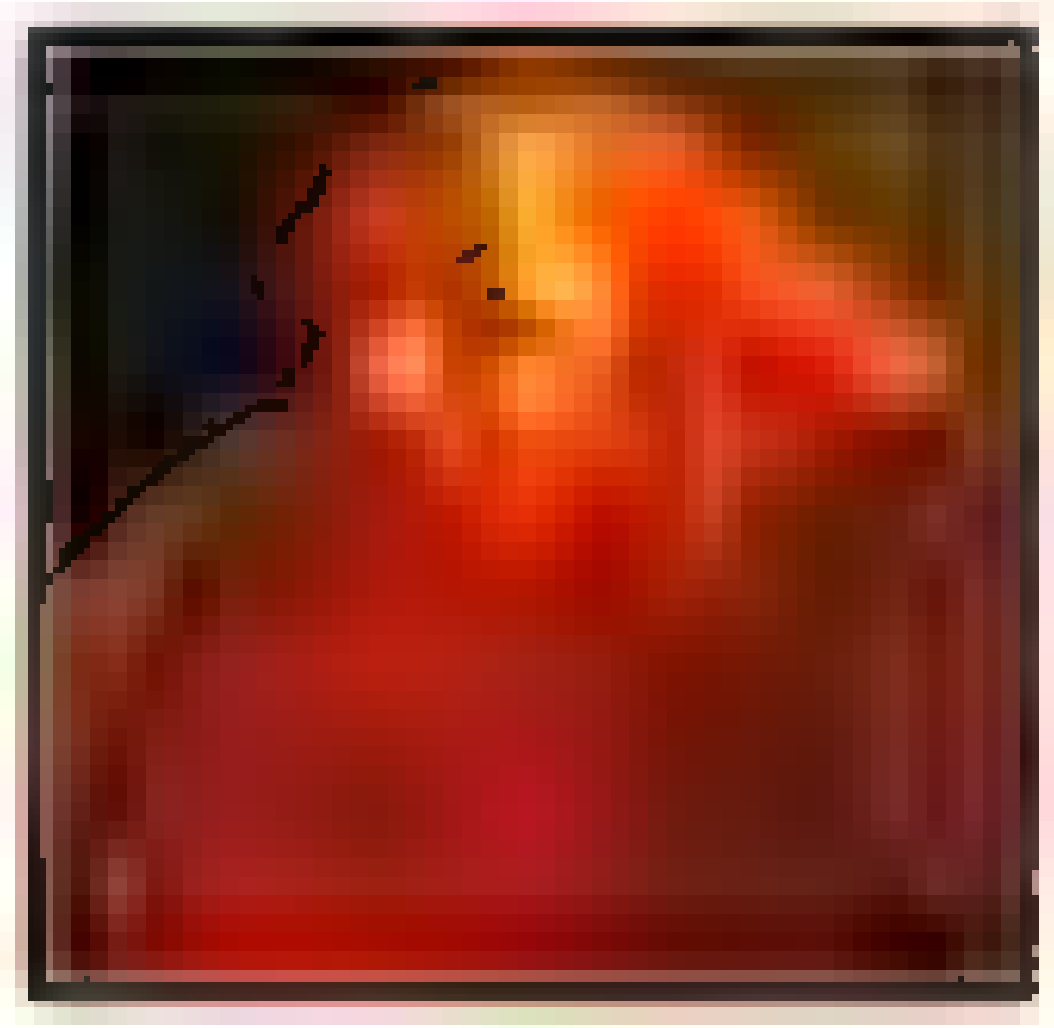
When you're painting hair make sure to use it as an expressive element. So, don't just paint it like hair but as a decorative element

Artist's secret
PAY ATTENTION
TO DETAIL

[illegible]

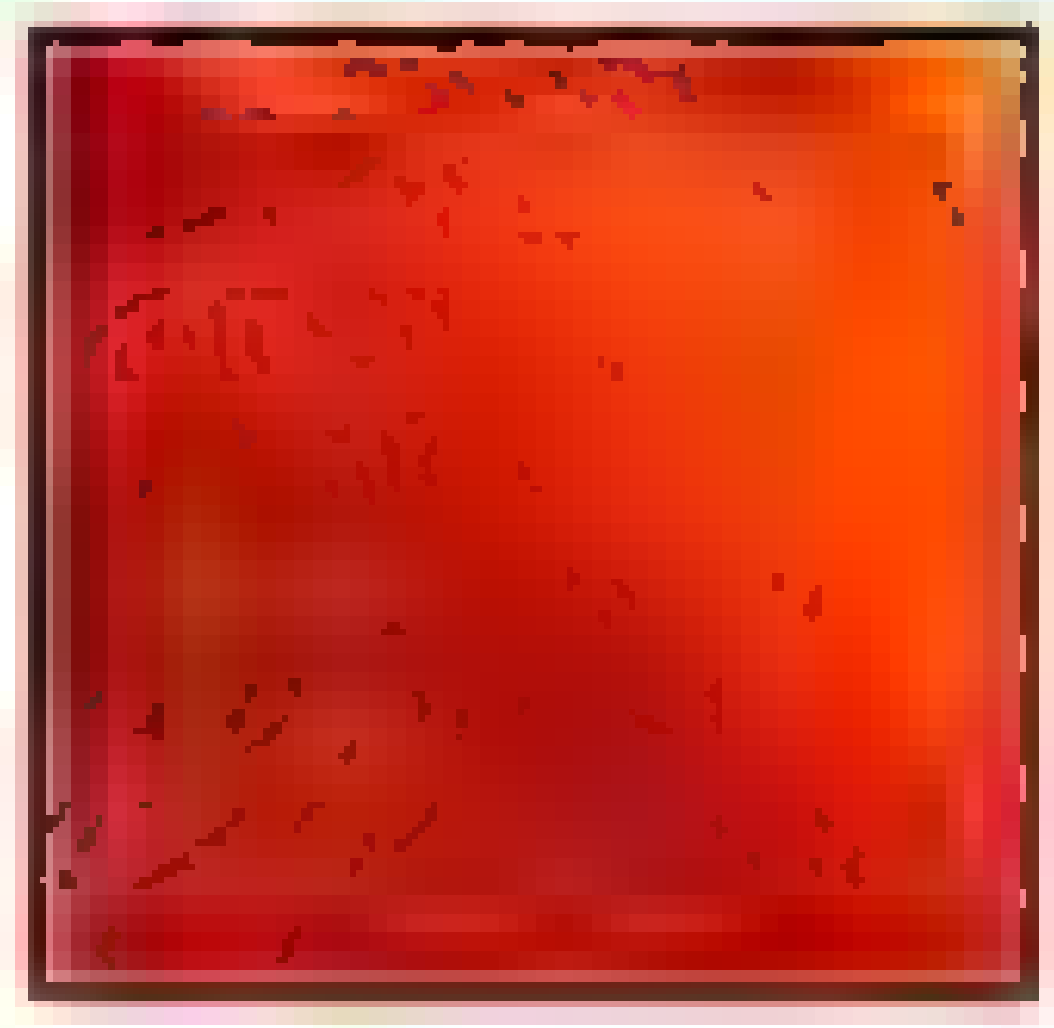
Step-by-step: Give your dwarf a mighty beard

① First I start by doing some doodles until I find an idea I like. Now I try to depict the hair as a solid shape – nothing too complex, just rough brush strokes and basic shapes but with enough care to make sure that the beard has a solid foundation before I go further. The hair reflects the surrounding colours so don't paint it all in the same tone.

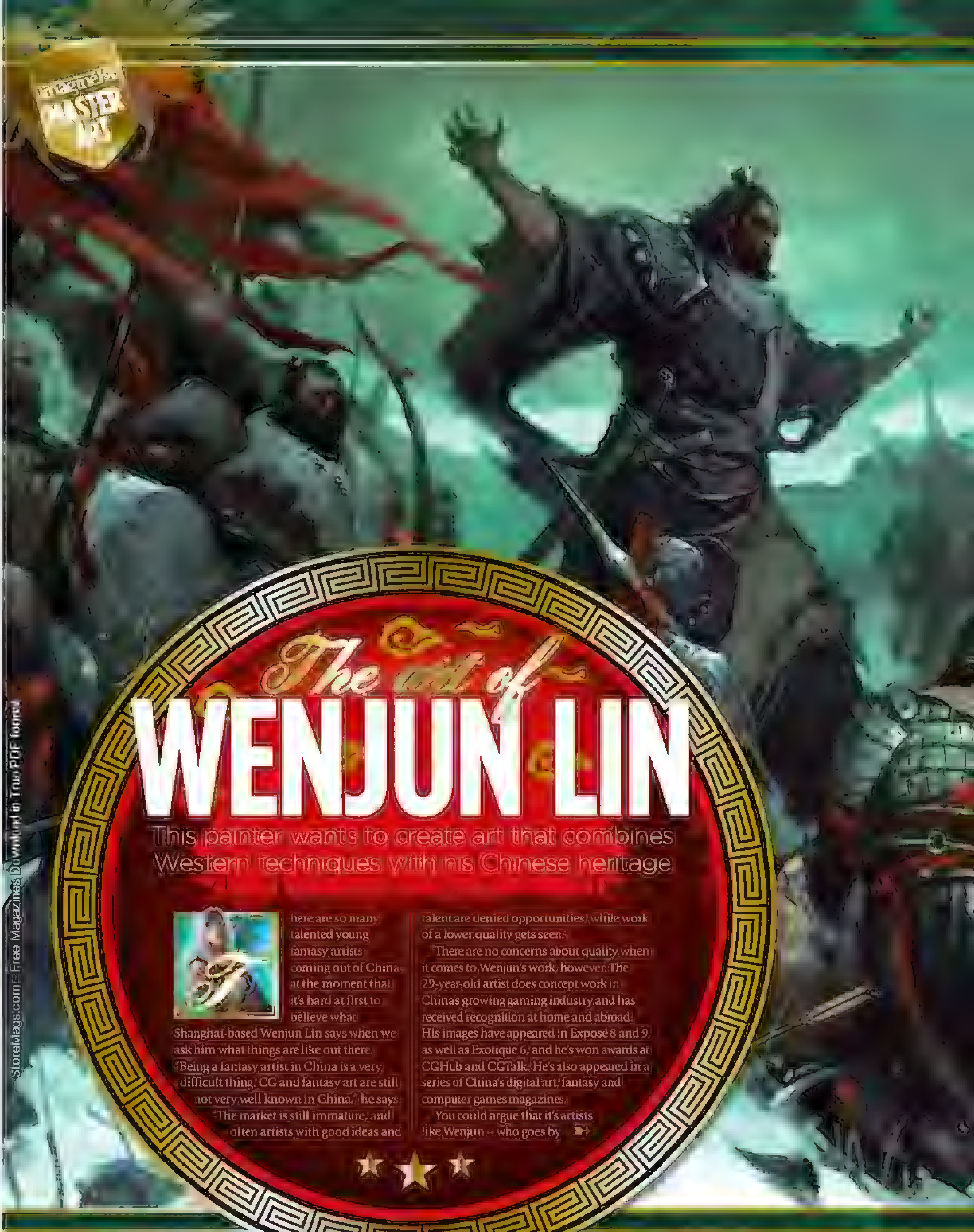


② Next, I start polishing the image and adding more detail. As you can see, I define the shape of the hair in more depth – the pigtails and the braids – as well as create a smooth surface, which is a great base to work with. Blender brushes such as the ones you can find in programs such as Painter or Paint Tool Sai, are perfect for that very purpose.

③ Finally, I begin to paint the hair texture, hair by hair, using a Hard Round brush about four pixels in size. Notice how not all the hairs have the same colour and how they follow a pattern – they're not placed randomly. It's important to keep the lighting and the volume as well as to create a rhythm for the hair. Make sure it flows naturally – as much as a beard can!



Got a digital art problem? Is an image giving you art-ache? Our panel can help. Email your question to our experts at **help@imaginefx.com** or write to **Artist Q&A, ImagineFX, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK.**



The art of

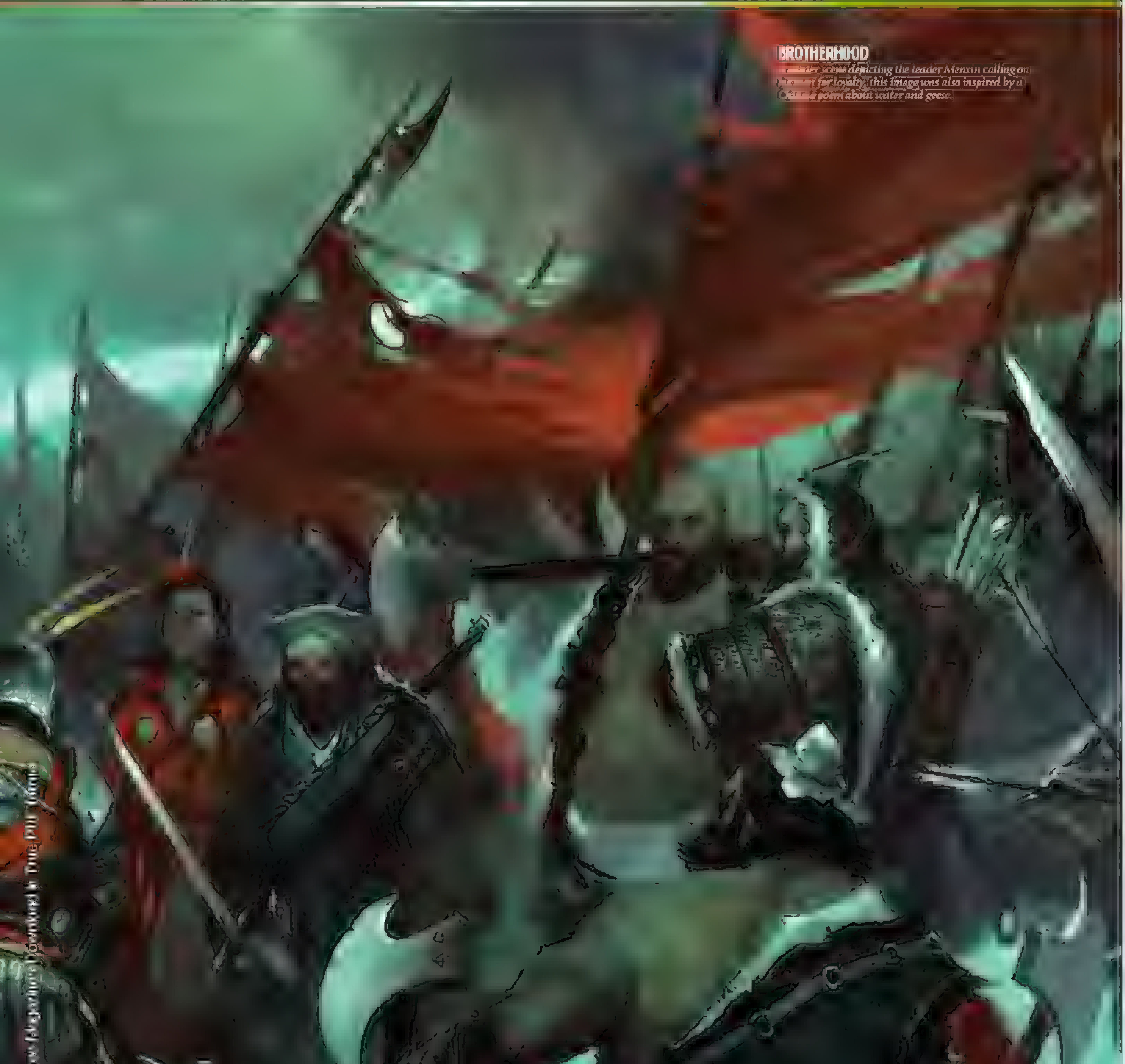
WENJUN LIN

This painter wants to create art that combines Western techniques with his Chinese heritage

There are so many talented young fantasy artists coming out of China at the moment that it's hard at first to believe what Shanghai-based Wenjun Lin says when we ask him what things are like out there. "Being a fantasy artist in China is a very difficult thing. CG and fantasy art are still not very well known in China," he says. "The market is still immature, and often artists with good ideas and talent are denied opportunities, while work of a lower quality gets seen."

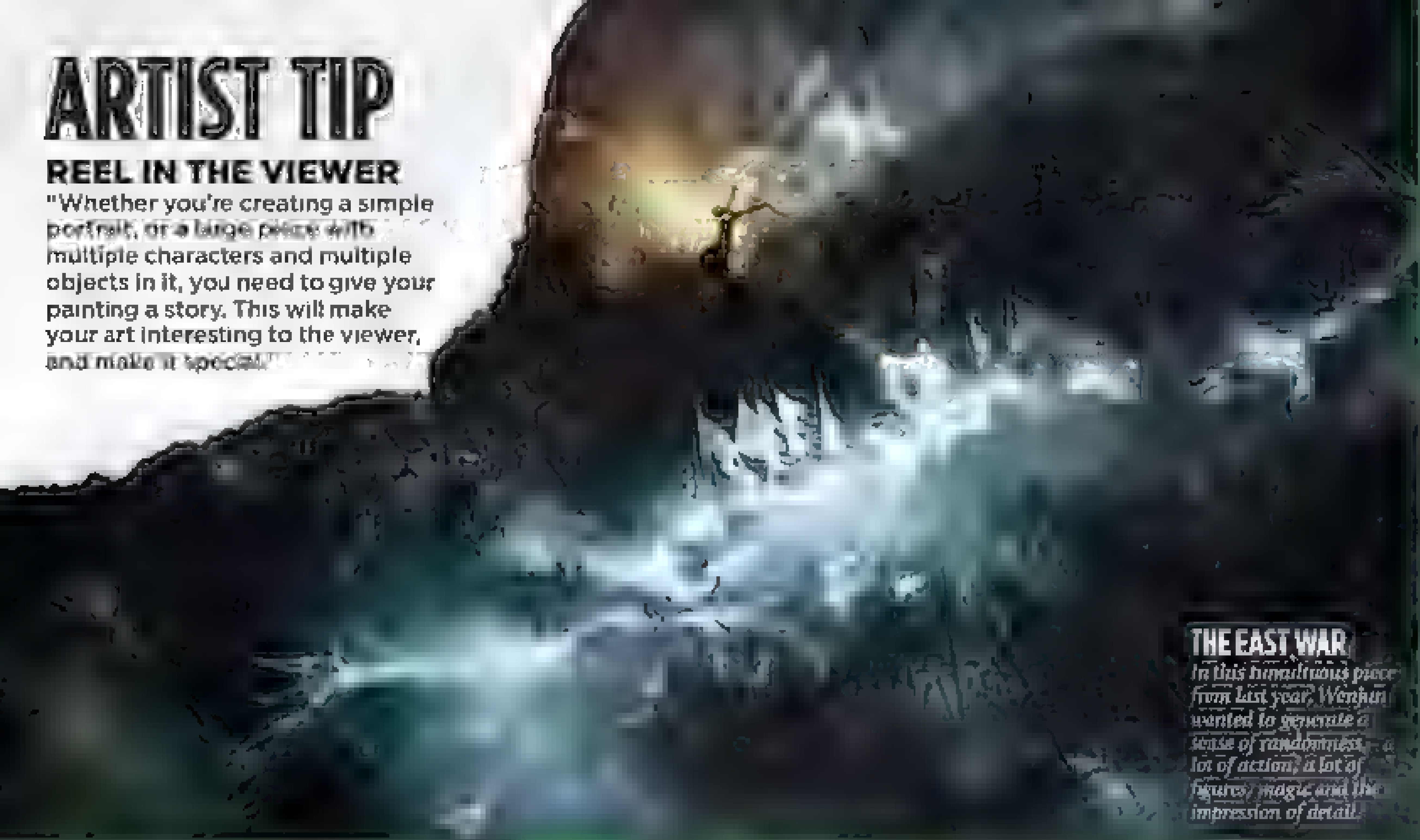
There are no concerns about quality when it comes to Wenjun's work, however. The 29-year-old artist does concept work in China's growing gaming industry and has received recognition at home and abroad. His images have appeared in Exposé 8 and 9, as well as Exotique 6, and he's won awards at CGHub and CGTalk. He's also appeared in a series of China's digital art, fantasy and computer games magazines.

You could argue that it's artists like Wenjun – who goes by ➤



BROTHERHOOD

A winter scene depicting the leader Menxin calling on his men for loyalty, this image was also inspired by a Chinese poem about water and geese.



ARTIST TIP

REEL IN THE VIEWER

"Whether you're creating a simple portrait, or a large piece with multiple characters and multiple objects in it, you need to give your painting a story. This will make your art interesting to the viewer, and make it special."

THE EAST WAR
In this tumultuous piece from last year, Wenjun wanted to generate a sense of randomness – a lot of action, a lot of figures, magic and the impression of detail.

[illegible] the online moniker [illegible] that are giving China its huge reputation overseas, even though it's a tough scene at home. And as he points out, there are all kinds of things that give him and his fellow Chinese artists a creative boost. China's 5,000 years of history might impose certain traditional expectations that limit young artists domestically, but for Wenjun the culture is a wonderful source of ideas and inspiration.

"There are many talented artists and there's a wealth of artistic tradition, so fantasy art will develop and improve here," he says. "I think young Chinese artists are inheriting great traditions, and should communicate more with foreign artists and try to be part of the global culture."

This philosophy is very much reflected in Wenjun's own creations, in which the artist [illegible] Eastern themes and techniques together with Western styles of composition. His recent work has focused on medieval battle scenes with strong contrast in the lighting and plenty of action. While some of his earlier works had a light, colourful, manga-esque feel to them, today the artist's work is becoming gritty and dark. Ominous, even.

"I want my artwork to tell a story, and especially recently, that story has been about tension and war. If you imagine that you're on the battlefield, what can you see? Maybe it isn't beautiful shapes or sweet colours, but just black and white. Perhaps you can't make out the specific appearance of things, or see details on all the equipment, but you can feel a strong sense of movement and atmosphere," he says.

EXAGGERATION PLAYS A ROLE

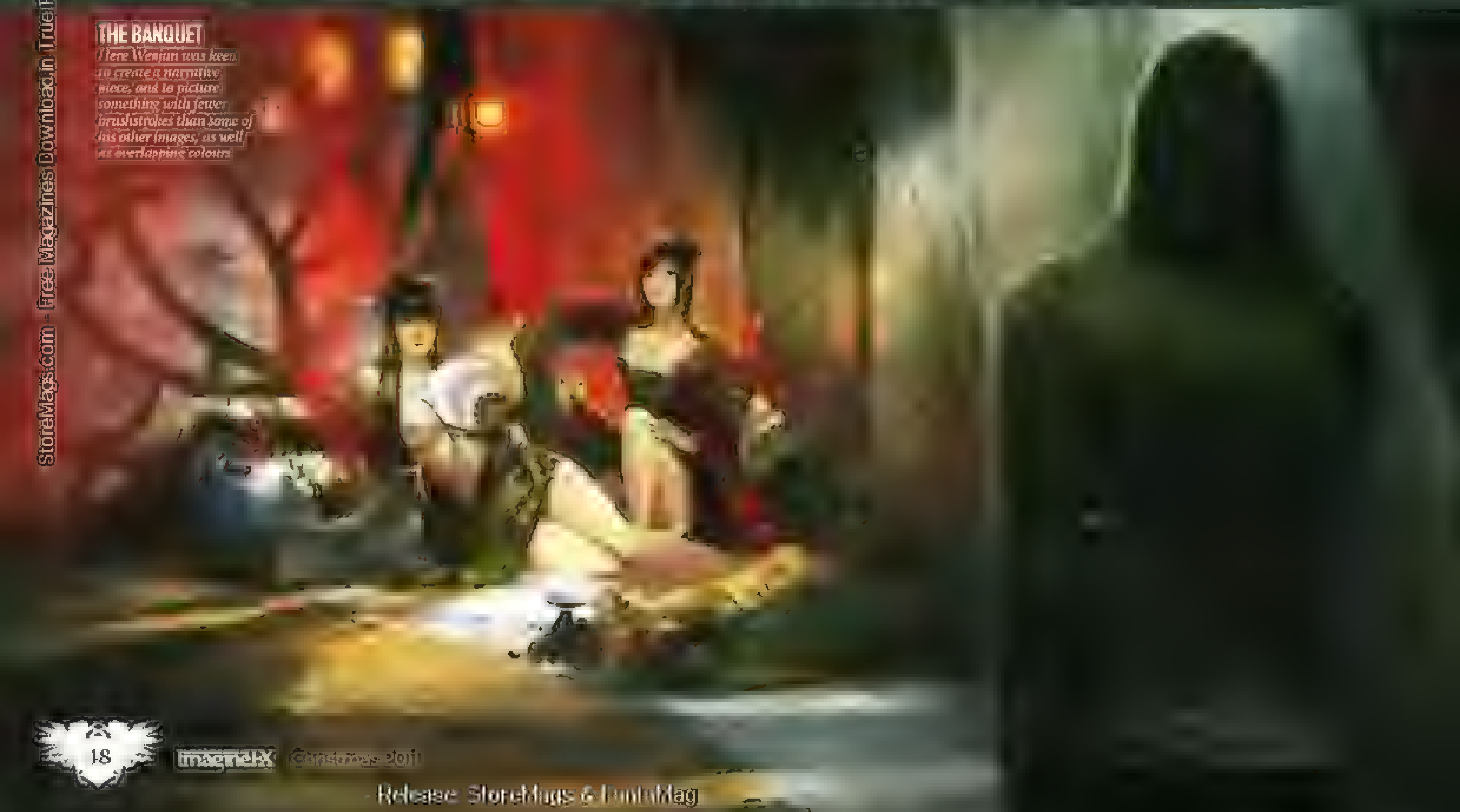
For Wenjun, it's about creating an impression, and exaggeration is often the tool that will give a piece its impact. He continues: "I want my work to be alive and breathing. All of the composition, lighting and forms should create a balance. What I want to say is that the most important thing is the accuracy of the feeling, rather than the accuracy of the modelling. Art needs

> "I firmly believe that art has a life and soul. I'm focusing on catching the point at which the art starts to breathe"

Wenjun Lin
VITAL STATISTICS

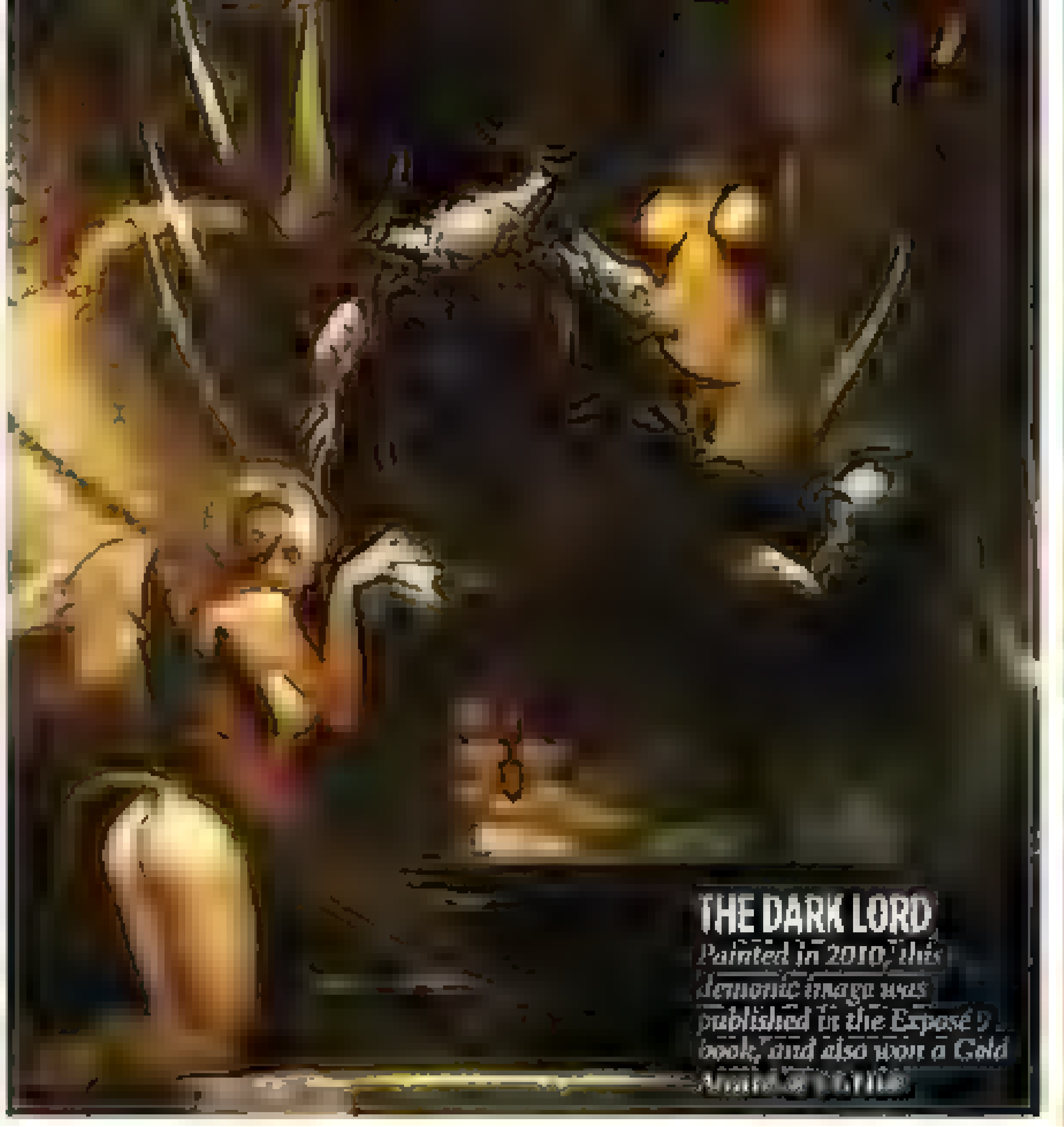
"I want my artwork to tell a story"

Date of birth
20 May 1982
Place of birth
[illegible]
Province
Current location
[illegible], China
Favourite artists
Frank Frazetta
Craig Mullins
[illegible]
What's the last book that you read?
[illegible] Of Thrones
What are your favourite movies?
[illegible] Fu Panda. Both films are [illegible] and contain [illegible] Chinese [illegible]
Who is your favourite mythological character, and why?
The Monkey King [illegible] and Ac[illegible] [illegible]
If you could go anywhere for your next holiday, where would you go?
England and Paris
Contact
[illegible]0520@[illegible]



THE BANQUET
Here Wenjun was keen to create a narrative piece, and to picture something with fewer brushstrokes than some of his other images, as well as overlapping colours

Release: StoreMags & FantoMag



THE DARK LORD
Painted in 2010, this demonic image was published in the Exposé 9 book, and also won a Gold Award [illegible]

exaggeration – there's no such thing as a 100 per cent accurate image."

Growing up in a small town in northern China, Wenjun spent eight years learning the country's traditional creative media: sketching, watercolour, oil painting and sculpture. He still loves nature and the countryside, and even since moving to Shanghai he'll still lose himself in a forest whenever he gets the chance, painting or filling up his sketchbook. "I'll even forget to eat or drink," he adds.

It's from this traditional Chinese background that he feels his artistic style has grown. "I firmly believe that art has a life and soul. I'm focusing on catching the point at which the art starts to breathe and that feeling. Picasso said, 'Chinese painting is the most advanced form of painting.' But the essence of Chinese painting is impressionistic. I always have that Chinese impressionism at the core of my work, but I combine that with Western styles and techniques."

It's not a position he's always held. Earlier in his career, he pushed himself hard to make his images as accurate as he »

THE WIND TOWER

Two month's hard work produced this personal image that's received praise from around the world

[illegible] of his day-to-day work, but as a response to it. He was working as a concept artist [illegible] game when he decided to take on a personal project [illegible] him. The Wind Tower is also an image that's gained him plenty of attention online.

"Many people know me through this work, which has won a CG Talk Award as well as many others," he says. "I was working on a game as a concept artist and illustrator. One day, I decided to create one special image for myself. The character, background, colour – all of them would be done in my personal style. I wanted the composition to be bold, but pleasant, with a wide-angle aspect to it. The main characters occupy most of the area, but I wanted to add a lot of detail to the background so that it wouldn't look too narrow. I also tried to put as much distance between the foreground and background as possible to keep it bold. I'd never spent more than two months working on one image before. It was a big challenge for me, and was done by hand. Yet The Wind Tower seems a really good work even now, even if the style is a little colourful and naive."

ARTIST TIP

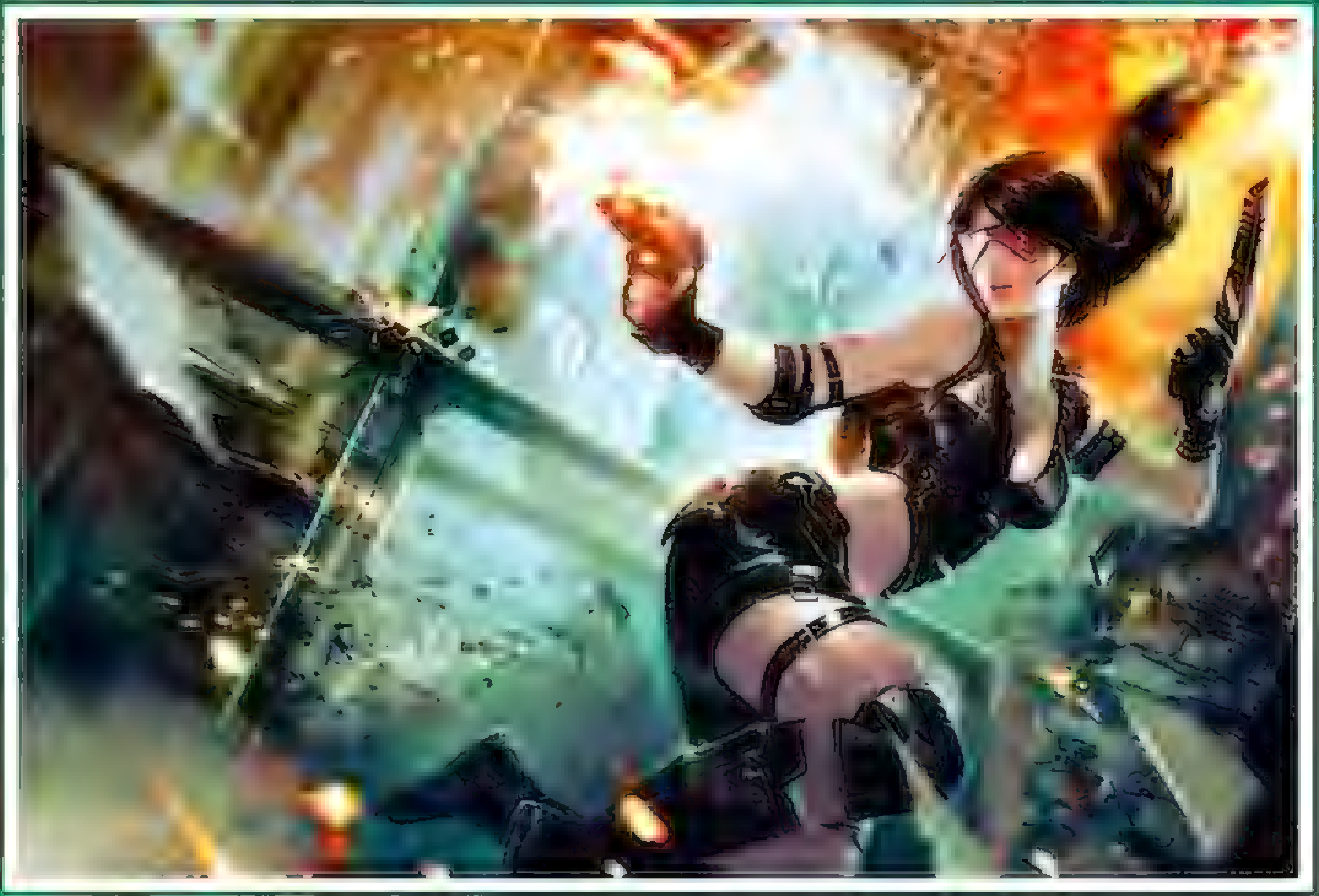
TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

"Always believe in and follow those flashes of inspiration you get. Take a note down at the time you get one – it may be a form, a colour or a texture that gives you an idea. Inspiration can come from anywhere."

SPARTACUS

The recent, gore-laden retread of the famed gladiator inspired Wenjun's dynamic battle scene

Wenjun's more recent pieces have been largely inspired by fantasy and historical battle scenes. "I was fascinated by 2010's TV series Spartacus: Blood And Sand. Although Spartacus is a Western character, he's not a stranger to me. I see him as a very human hero. I read more about his history and collected a lot of information about him. To begin with I sketched a lot of ideas and I decided to put the character in a central position. [illegible] and the red brings dynamism and cruelty to the image. I had the confidence to paint this in a Western style, moving outside of the Eastern techniques I know. The image is full of passion and energy – it's also joyful and refreshing."

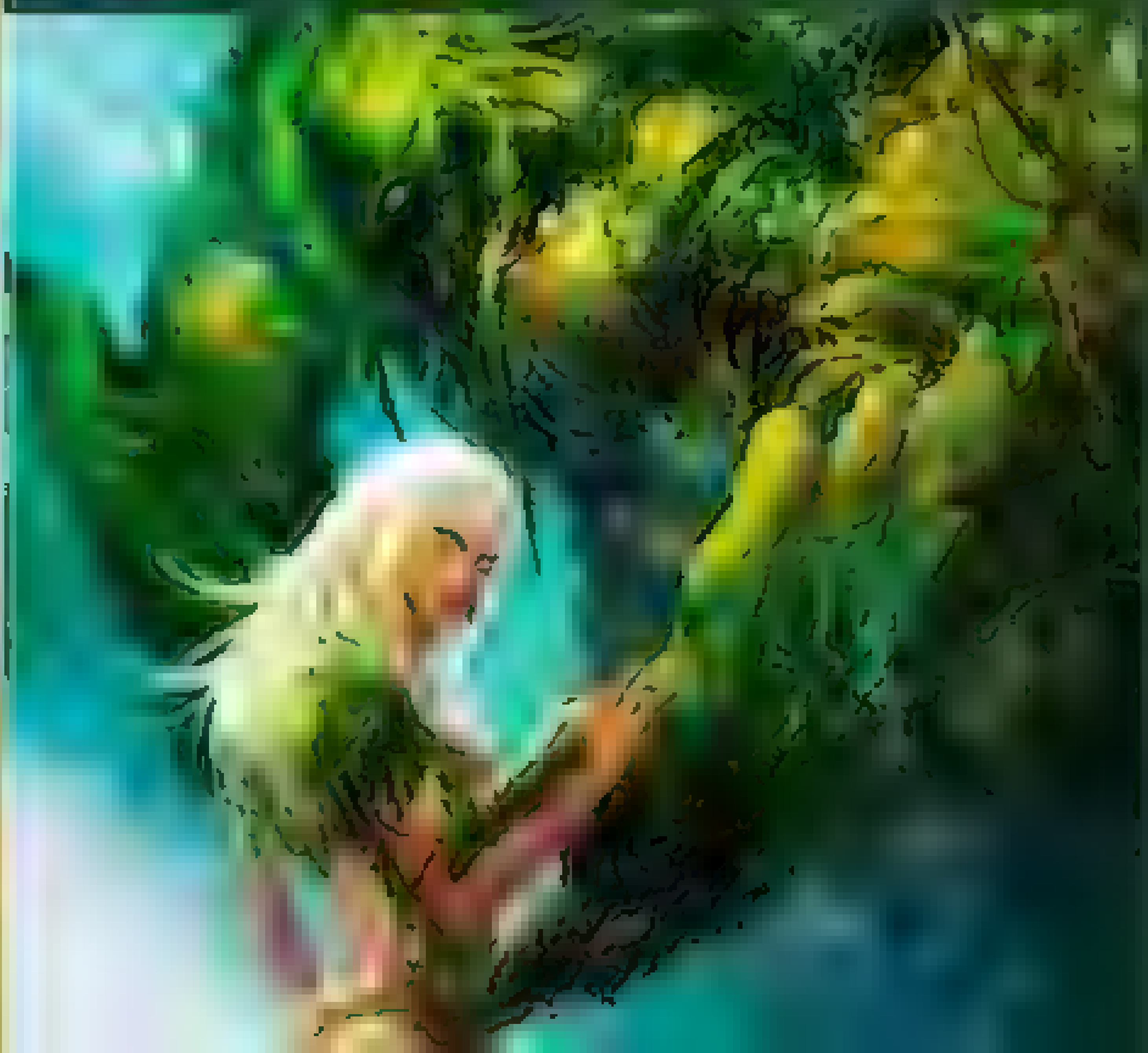


could, trying to compete with photorealism. Gradually, he shifted his goals and began working on images with a powerful impact, not worrying about trivial details but to concentrate on the brushes and textures. With this giving his work more depth, he then took the further step of concentrating on themes and feelings. He likens it to fine painting.

The way he talks about the fusion of Eastern and Western styles, it's no surprise to learn that he loves artists from both traditions. He refers to Frank Frazetta as "a god of art" and also admires Craig Mullins and Jaime Jones for how they observe things. They've inspired his concept art. "But the most important man is the great Chinese oil painting master Wang Kewei. All of his artworks depict wars in Chinese history. They're atmospheric and epic. Under his influence, I've found a lot of energy and pride in being Chinese. This nation's culture is one of the world's great cultures. I hope I can create artwork that has cultural meaning and value, like him."

FIRE
One of Wenjun's more colourful paintings, Fire's composition is enhanced by colours that transition from warm to cold tones.

GREEN MAN
Inspired by myths about the Green Man, Wenjun did a lot of sketching before planning out this mystical painting that mixes Eastern style and Western folklore.



USING THE RIGHT TOOLS

As a games artist in modern Shanghai, Photoshop has replaced palettes of oils and watercolours, and the brushes that go with them. But the digital brushes within Photoshop are something he values. "Choosing the right tools will improve the quality of work," he says. "I still like sketching on paper with pencil – a lot of great concepts and inspirations are from my sketchbooks. Making some of my favourite brushes is also important, though. I play a lot with touch and texture in my works; most feelings come from real things like oil paints, watercolour pen, pencil and more."

> "I hope I can create artwork that has cultural meaning and value"

Wenjun has worked as a professional artist for the past seven years. He began his career in the world of comics, and went to a small Beijing studio in 2004 where he worked on comics, books and cards. But he found the experience disheartening and after a year working 14-hour days on a low salary, he lost his passion for it. "So I tried to find other work," he says. "Now I'm a game concept artist and illustrator. I like my work, but games aren't my only interest. Someday, maybe I will go back to comics; it will be amazing."

He started as a games concept artist in 2005 working for Webzen, a joint Chinese-Korean company where he created imagery for a game called The Kingdom. In 2008, he joined Perfect World where he's worked on Dragon Sword, an online game involving humans, spirits and demons. He's also working on their next project as art director. In addition to the day job, he also creates self-initiated artwork that he uploads to his CGSociety and CGHub portfolios, impressing fans around the world.

His current project is still under wraps, but he's overseeing concepts for a big online game. "It's got a very strong Eastern fantasy style mixed with a punk style of art. This is a great challenge for me – I'm devoting all my energy and passion to it. Soon we'll announce the project to the world!"

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STIEG LARSSON
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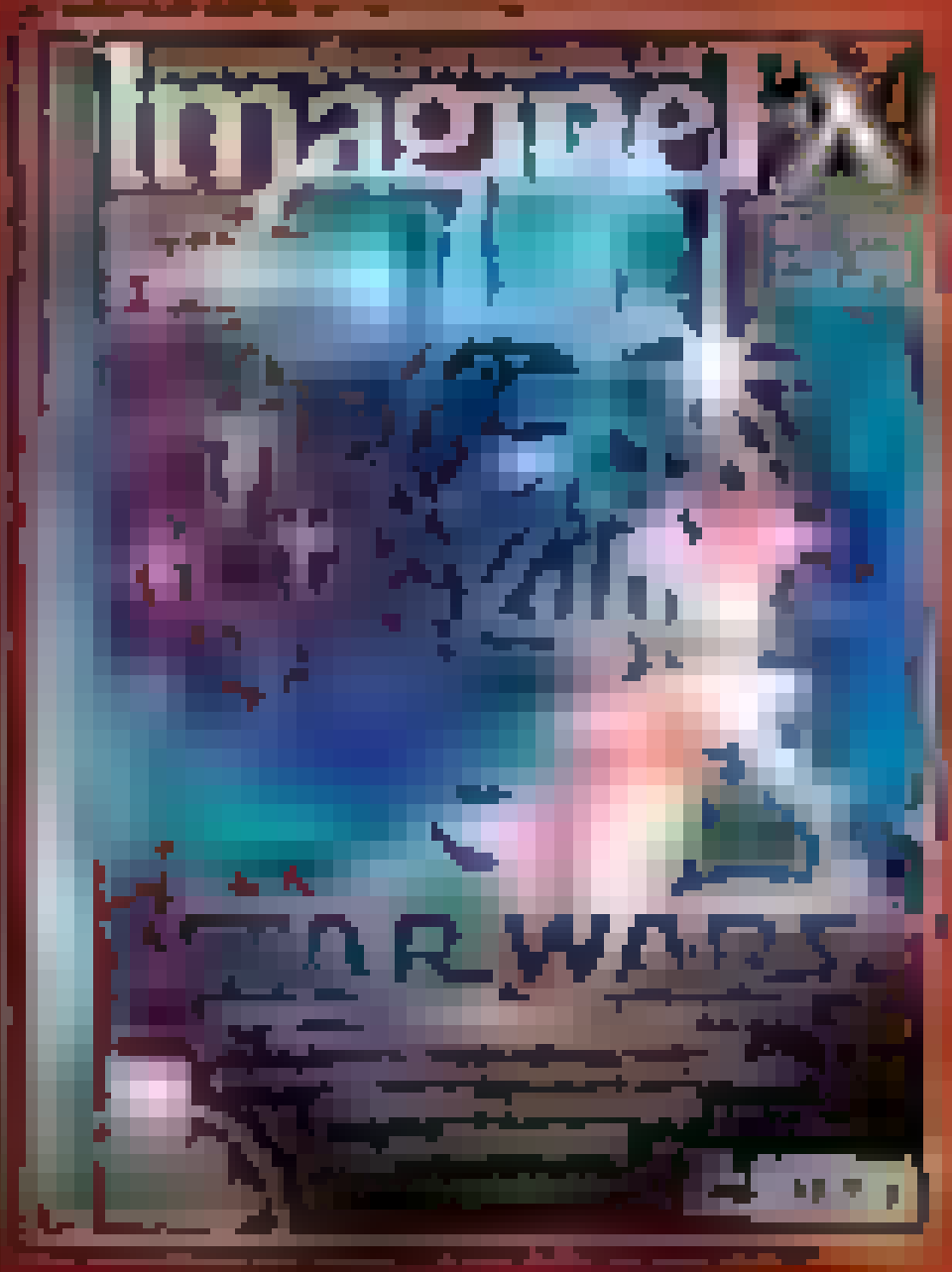
Issue 72 August 2011

[illegible] film concept artist Bobby Chiu's marvellous creature design cover workshop, discover how to turn a 2D design into a 3D character, how to add beauty to fantasy, then paint fur, scales, feathers and other detail with our fantasy creature special issue! Plus: the Massive Black studio laid bare.

Issue 73 September 2011

Create a radiant mermaid with Mélanie Delon, learn how to render real skin tones, age your art and paint like Frazetta. It's a fantasy special for our Q&A section, which covers everything from painting chain mail to fiery dragon breath. Plus: famed artist and designer Roger Dean.

Issue 74 October 2011



Our Star Wars issue is full of imagery from a galaxy far, far away. We find out what it was like to work on the Prequel trilogy, and talk to the legendary Ralph McQuarrie. On the workshop front, Iain McCaig reveals how to paint a Sith warrior and Terryl Whitlatch explains creature design on a galactic scale.

Issue 75 November 2011

Our game art issue kicks off with the inspiring imagery for Guild Wars, while StarCraft, Uncharted 3 and Magic: The Gathering all feature in our packed workshop section. Elsewhere, you'll doubtless feel inspired by the art of Chesley award-winner Lucas Graciano. Plus: how to paint a space-opera princess.

Issue 76 December 2011

Great artists, including Syd Mead, talk us through the Mechanics of Industrial Design, build a giant 3D fighting mech, ImagineFX's Rising Stars of 2011, and so much more!

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Mingzhu Yang

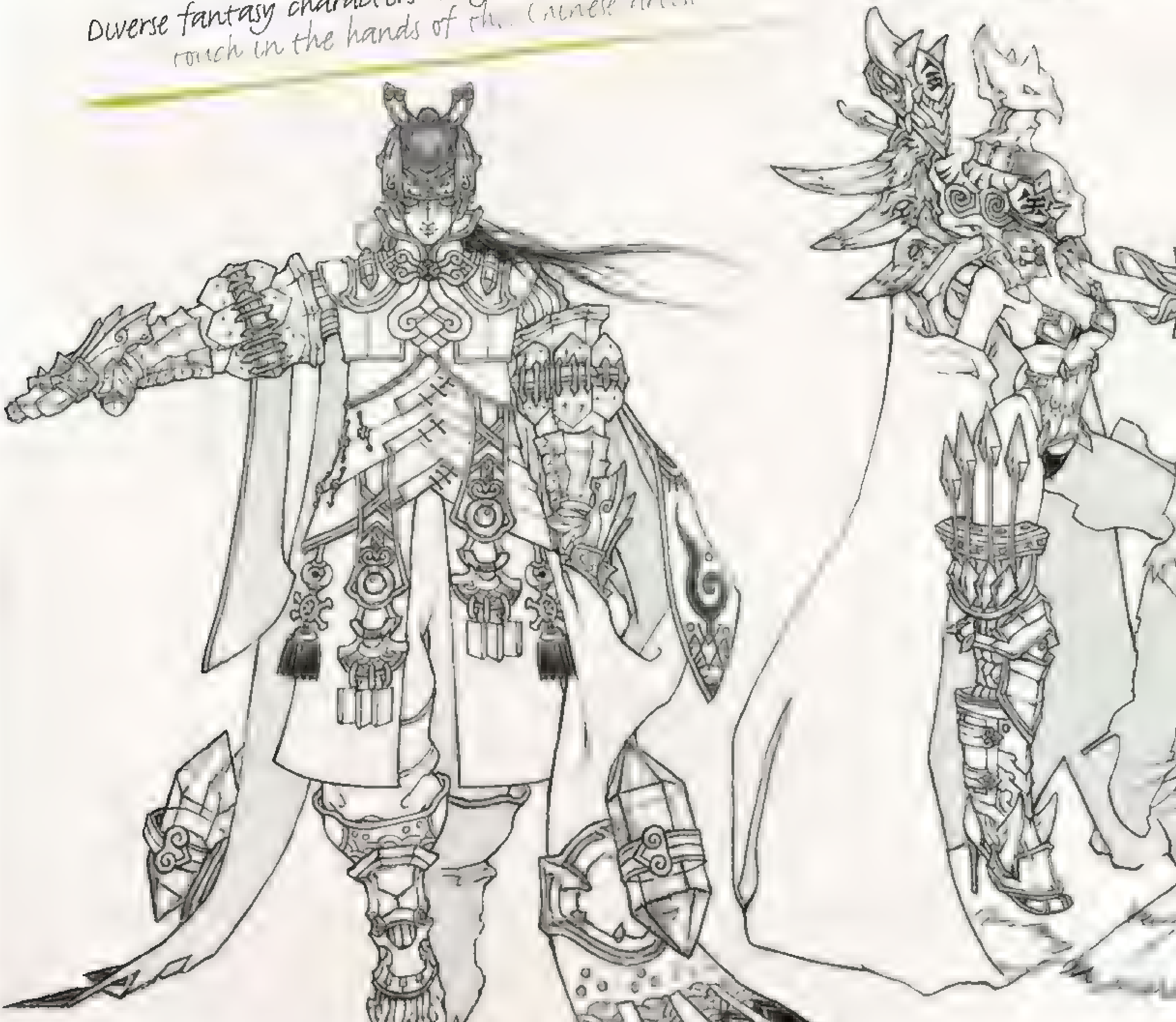
Diverse fantasy characters are given a stylish Oriental touch in the hands of this Chinese artist

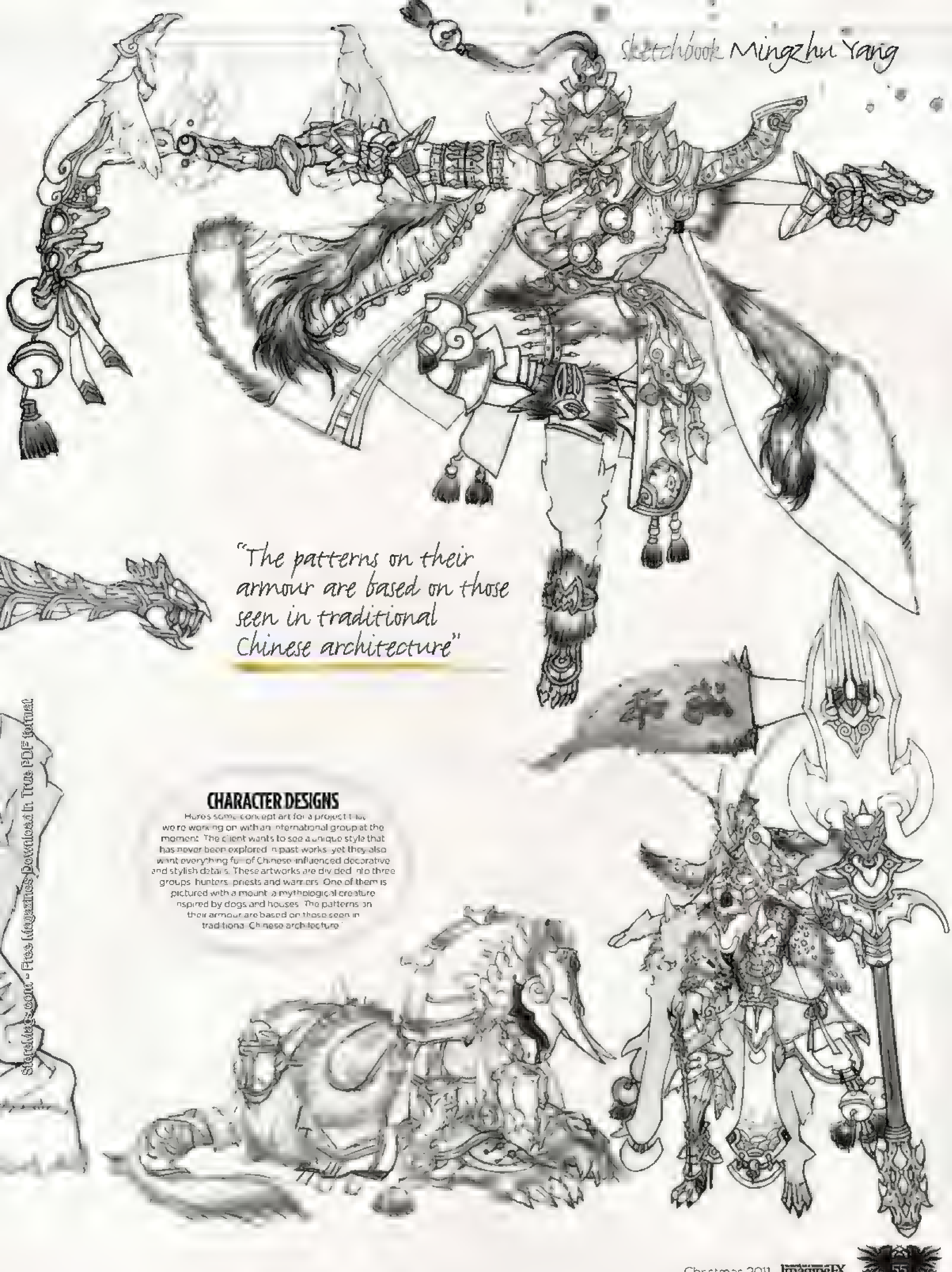
PROFILE

Mingzhu Yang

Born and brought up in Wuhan province, China Mingzhu studied illustration at Southwest University, Chongqing. She first worked for Tencent, a well-known Chinese IT company. Moving to its Shanghai studios, Mingzhu spent three years as a character artist. She has recently left work in China and aims to get further training abroad.

http://mingzhuyang.cghub.com

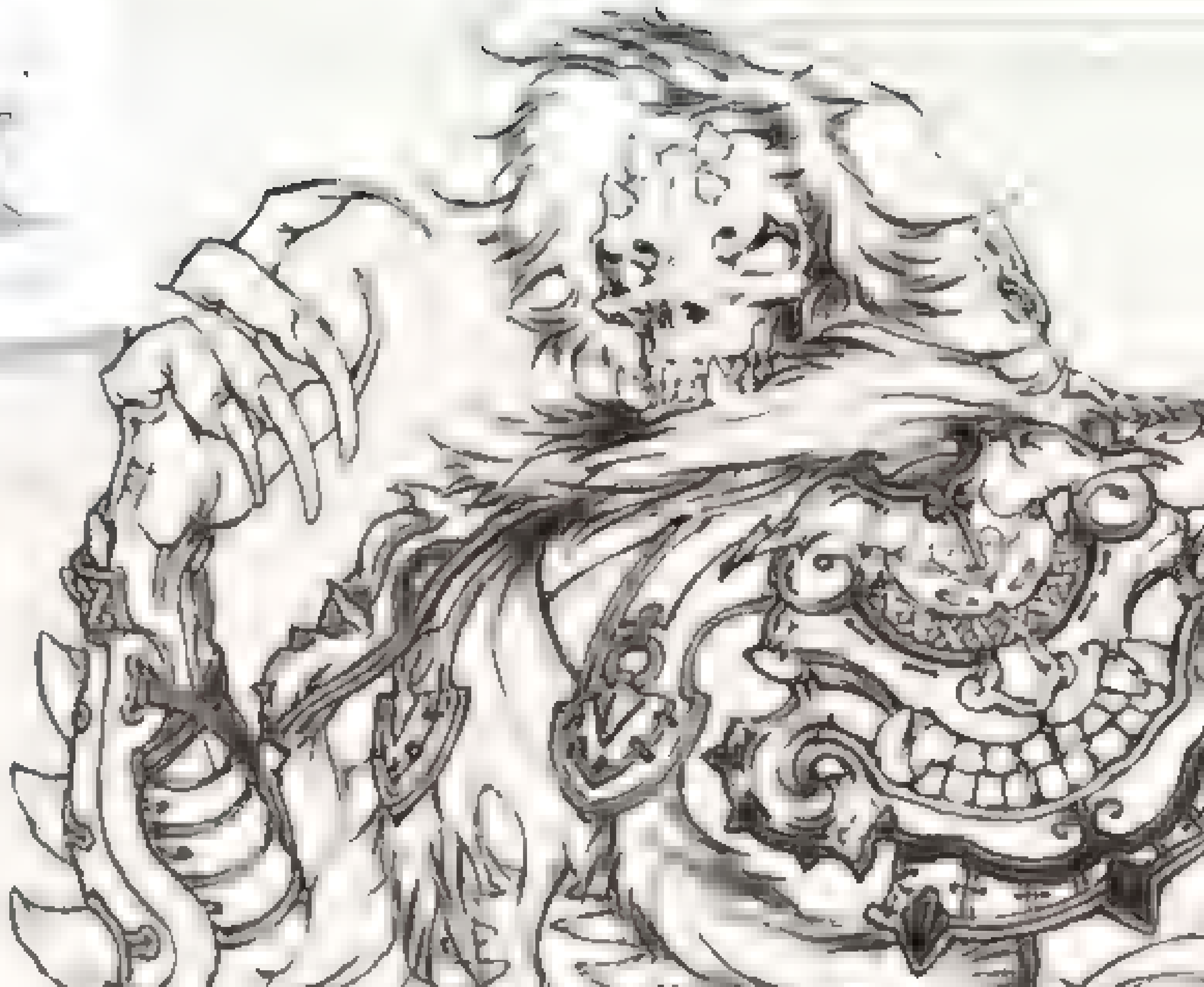




> "The patterns on their armour are based on those seen in traditional Chinese architecture"

CHARACTER DESIGNS

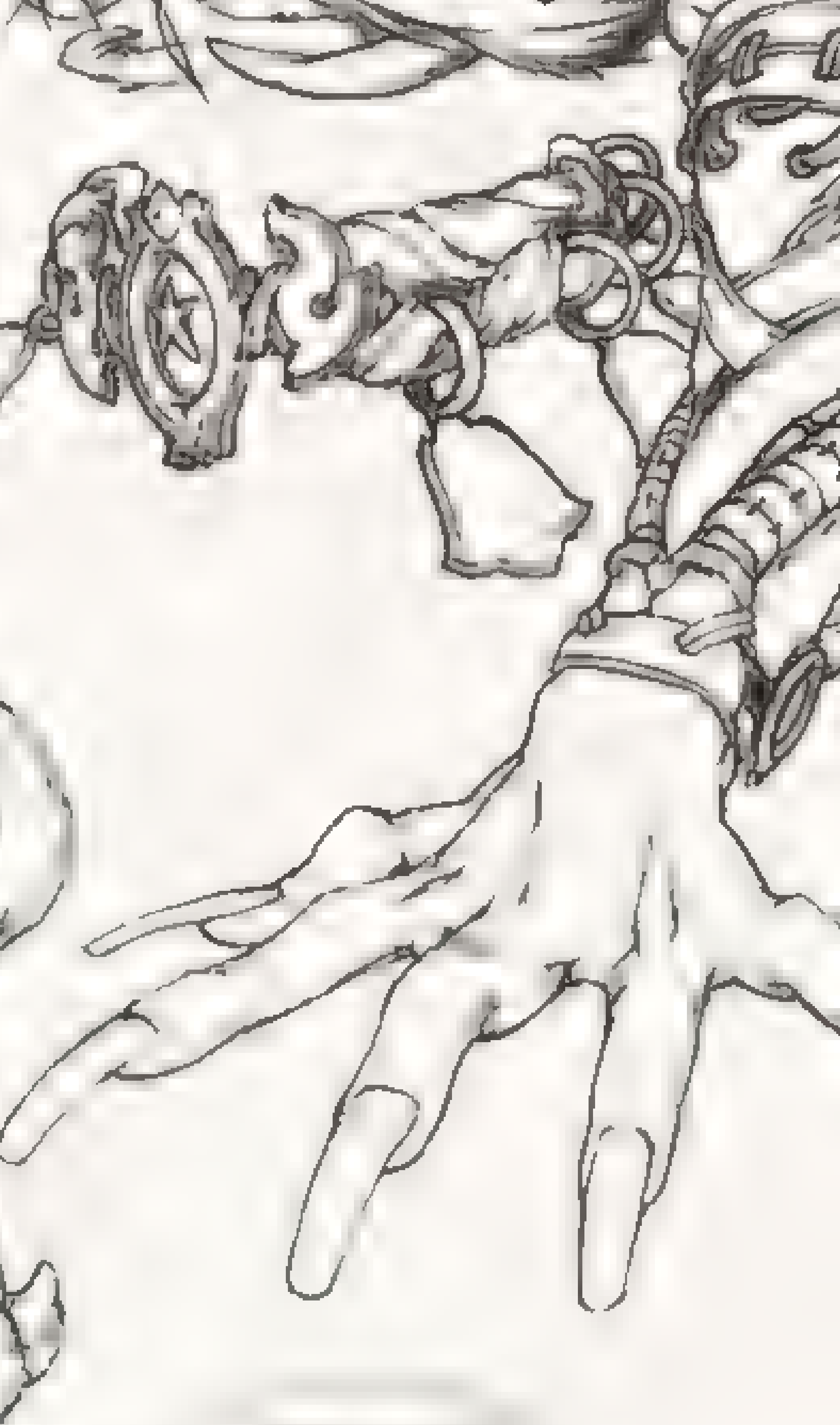
Here's some concept art for a project that we're working on with an international group at the moment. The client wants to see a unique style that has never been explored in past works, yet they also want everything full of Chinese-influenced decorative and stylish details. These artworks are divided into three groups: hunters, priests and warriors. One of them is pictured with a mount: a mythological creature inspired by dogs and houses. The patterns on their armour are based on those seen in traditional Chinese architecture."

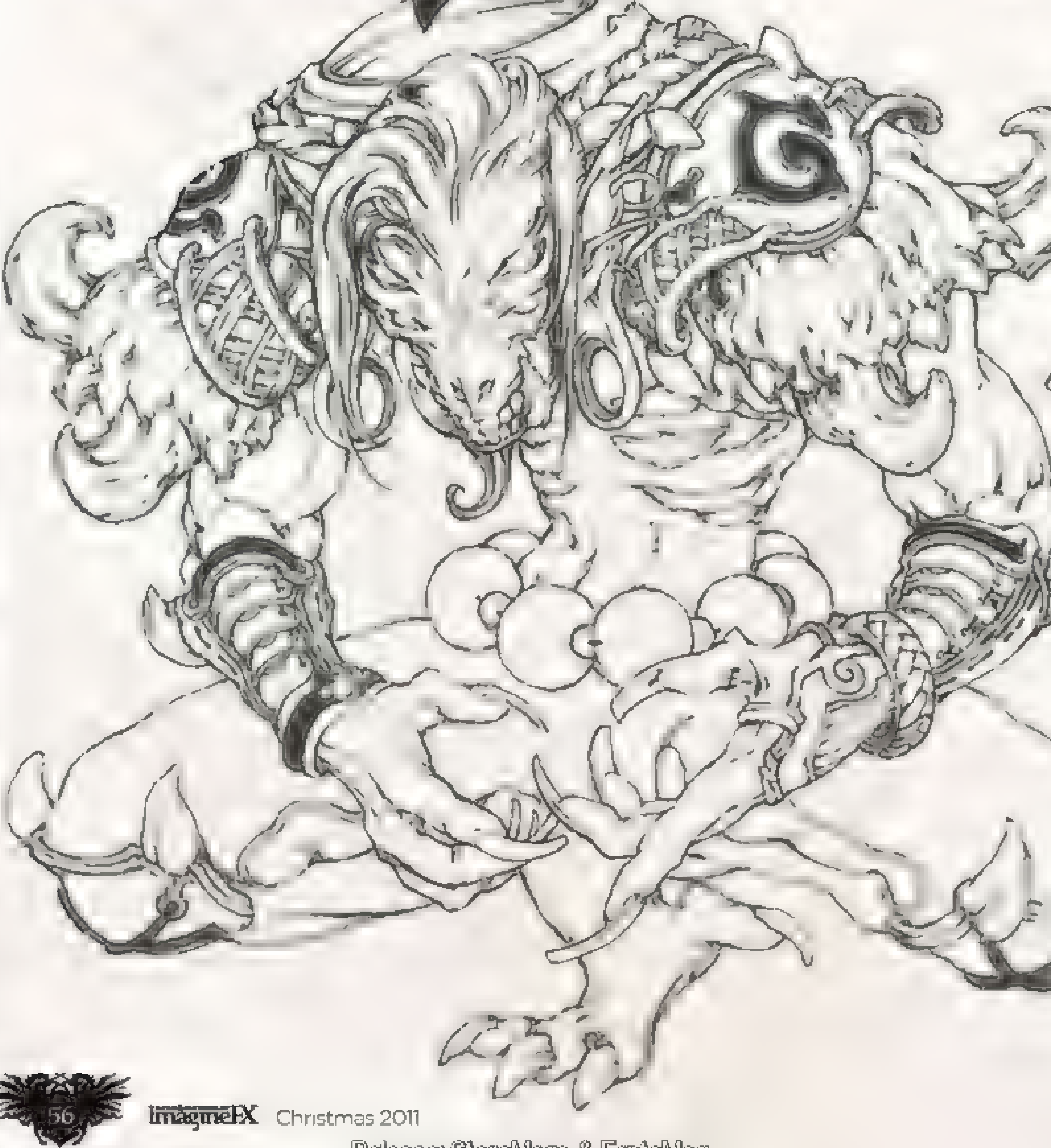


BEAST AND GHOST

"This is a poster created for one of my on-going projects. The client wanted me to create a floating character that resembled a ghost or elf. I chose to focus less on the lower part in favour of placing the emphasis on the upper half of the body. I painted African-style accessories around its ear and some industrial-looking patterns along the arms. It'll be fun to bring various design elements together on this character during the creative process."

"I tried to use a calligraphic style in these works, while keeping realism in mind"





DOUBLE BLADE

"This is a personal project I finished recently. The world for these characters is full of human and elves that follow a classic design. I tried to use a calligraphic style in these works, while keeping realism in mind. For me, it's fun to mix various styles within one character."

[illegible] share your sketches? [illegible] sketchbook [illegible]

MONSTER MANUAL 2
Players seeking a quick reference for the creatures in Dungeons & Dragons were confronted with Jesper's two-headed baboon critter with tentacle arms. And it's angry

> I have to be able to pull the spectator into a world that exists only in the imagination

JESPER EJSING

His art might be full of dragons and wizards, but for this Danish artist creating a believable world is key…

They say there are more Anglo-Saxon coins in Denmark than in England, and it's something that Jesper Ejsing finds funny. He laughs even more when we ask when they're going to give the money back. The tributes paid by British tribes to Danish kings helped them build 11th century Copenhagen. He lives in the city and draws inspiration from its medieval fortifications, some of which still stand.

Maybe we're never going to see that silver again, but there's a serious side to the conversation. Jesper's artwork is informed by his Viking heritage – the history, the culture and the mythology. "We got it with our mother's milk – fairytales and the Norse mythology stuff. It seems very natural to me," he says. "We've got all the museums and I can go check out ring mail or the Viking ornaments and all that kind of stuff, but I think the biggest advantage is that all the cultural stuff is still there."

It's not just the old axes, armour and longboats. Nor is it the stories of Thor, Loki, trolls, giants and dragons. What matters to him is that by learning from the Viking period he's made his artwork more authentic. Jesper's background in historical illustration means that he's studied the way daggers are strapped to the belt, where scabbards really hang and not just how armour looks, but how it fits. He has friends who are Viking re-enactors, and has tried on all the gear. Little details like this, he says, help his artwork make more sense to the viewer.

"What I take seriously about being a fantasy illustrator is that I picture a universe that doesn't exist," Jesper says. "I have to be able to pull the spectator into a world that exists only in the imagination and it'll always be my imagination or the game that we have in common. So how I do that believably is important, because I don't want to drag them into a stupid world. I want to drag them into a world that could actually exist with dragons and all this stuff."

[illegible]

Looking at the incredible pieces he's created over the past 15 years, it's no surprise to learn that Jesper's heroes include the Dungeons & Dragons artists Larry Elmore and Keith Parkinson. He decided at age 13, having seen an Elmore drawing of a female cleric, that he was going to be a fantasy artist. When he turned 16 he started freelancing. Seven years ago, Jesper finally got to meet his hero when he flew to Kentucky to take part in one of Larry Elmore's fantasy painting master classes.

By that time, the artist had already broken out of the Danish illustration scene and was making a name for himself on the international stage. Jesper's painted artwork for D&D rulebook covers, Magic: The Gathering and World of Warcraft.

PROFILE

Jesper Ejsing

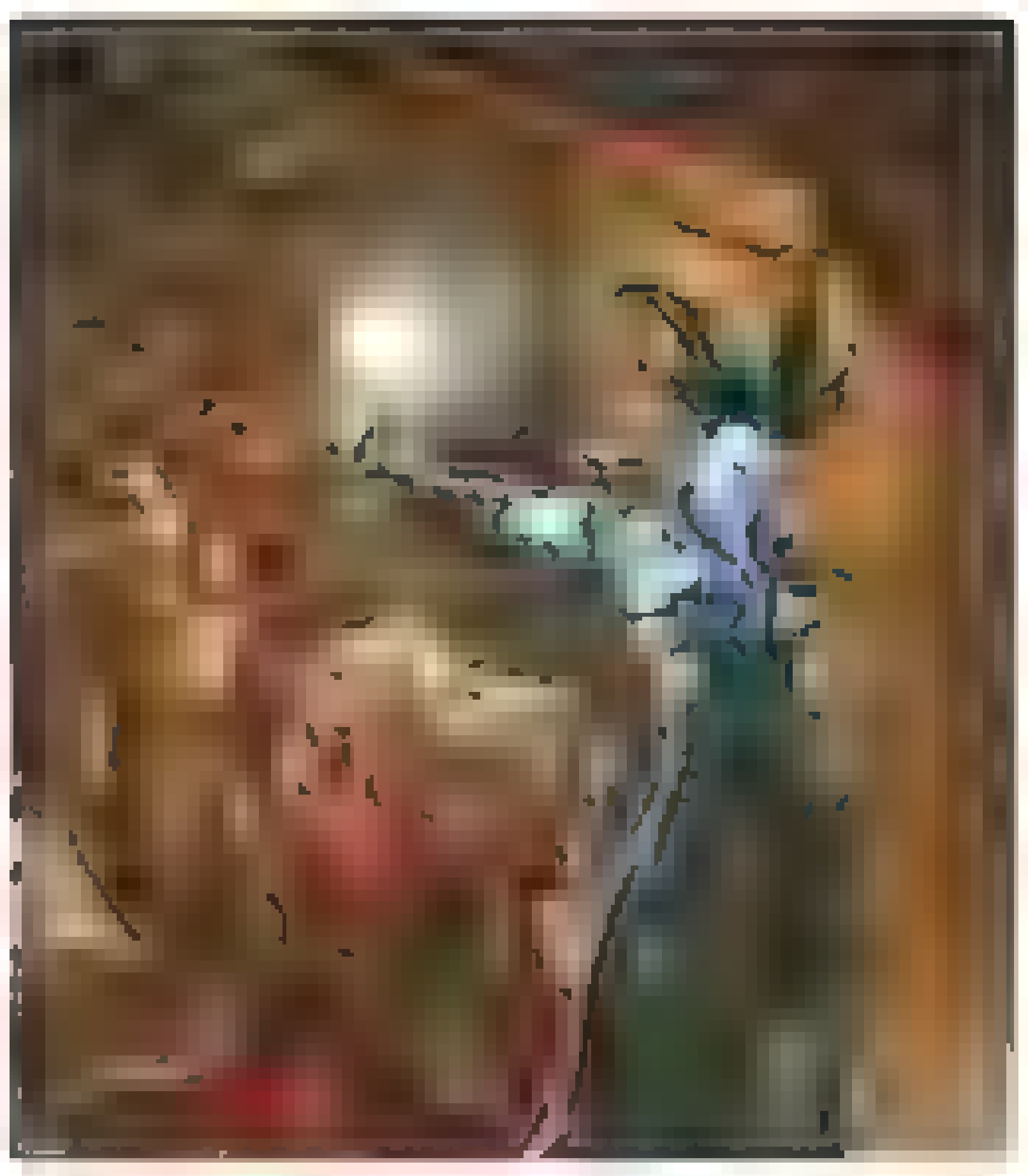
AGE: 38

FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Paul Bonner, Kevin Walker, Claire Wendling, Larry Elmore and Keith Parkinson.

MEDIA: Acrylic on board.

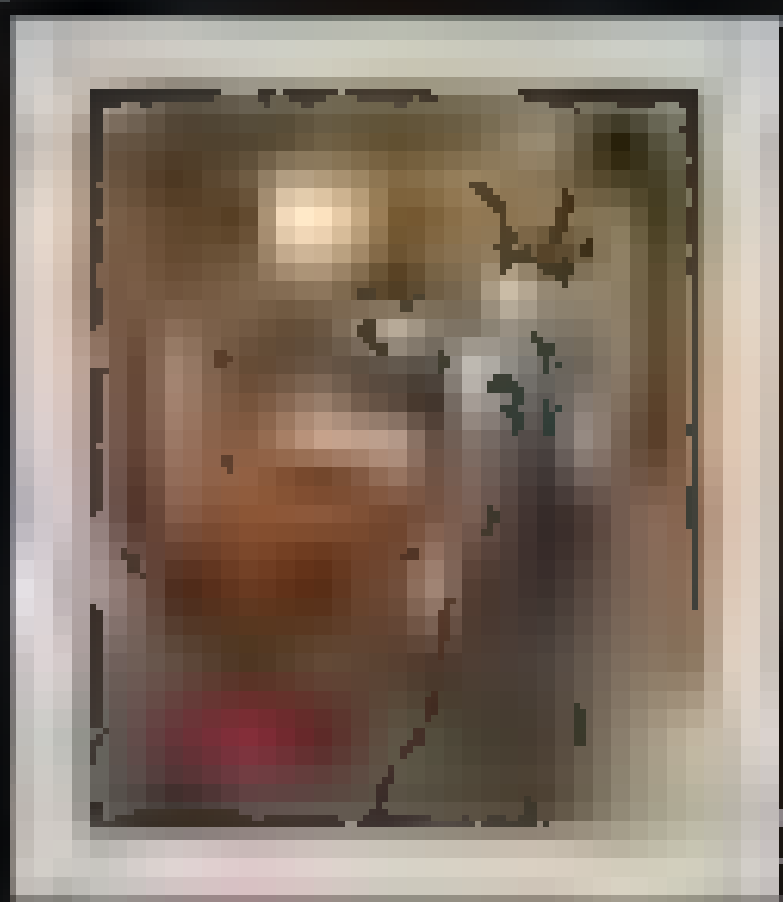
AVERAGE TIME PER IMAGE: About ten days for a cover image.

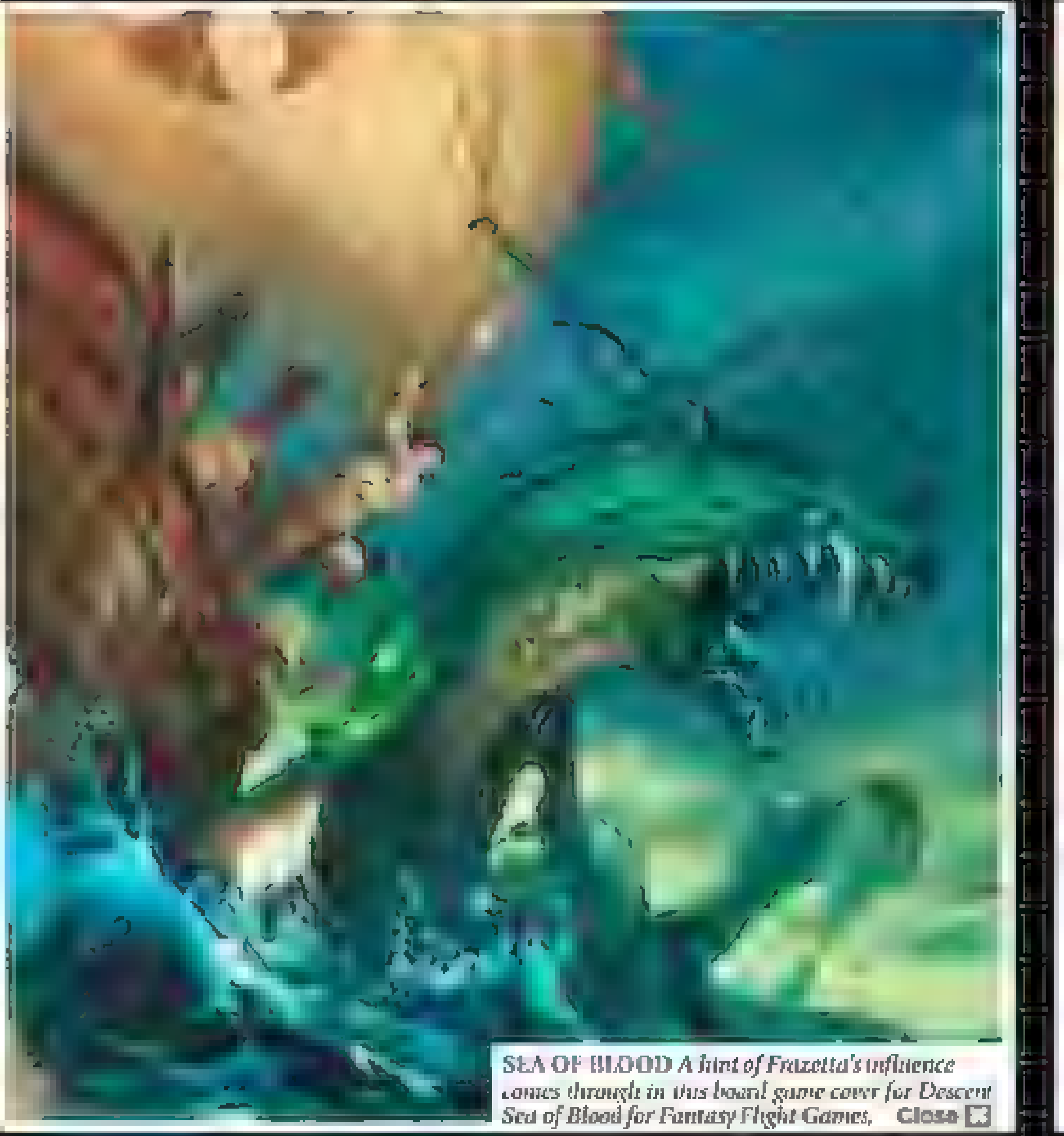
WEB: www.jesperejsing.com



FLOATING ORB *Here's one of Jesper's recent favourites. He painted it off his own bat and may or may not sell it to a client as a cover.* Close

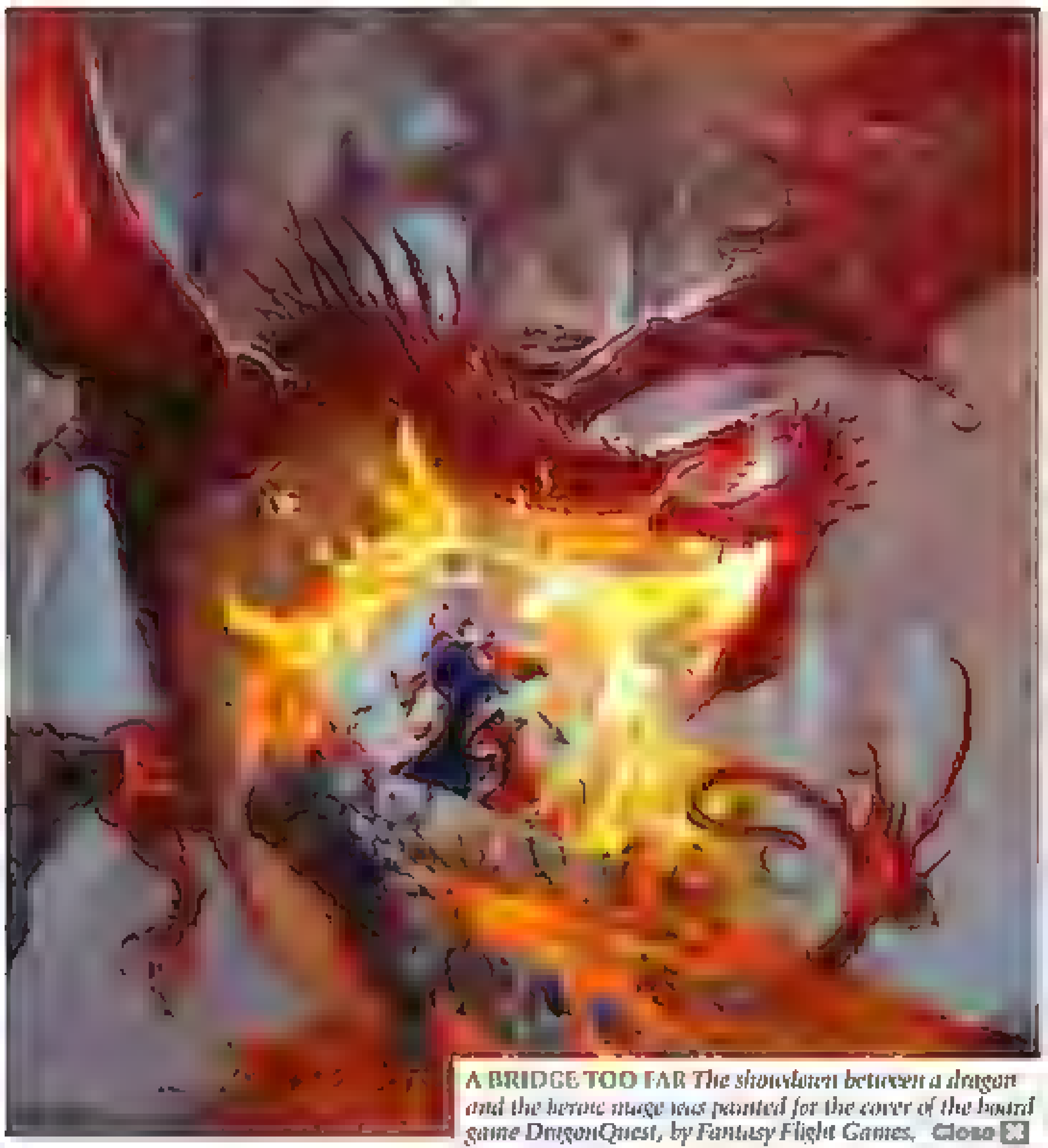
Gallery





SEA OF BLOOD *A hint of Frazetta's influence comes through in this board game cover for Descent Sea of Blood for Fantasy Flight Games.* Close

© 2010 Fantasy Flight Games



A BRIDGE TOO FAR *The showdown between a dragon and the heroic mage was painted for the cover of the board game DragonQuest, by Fantasy Flight Games.* Close

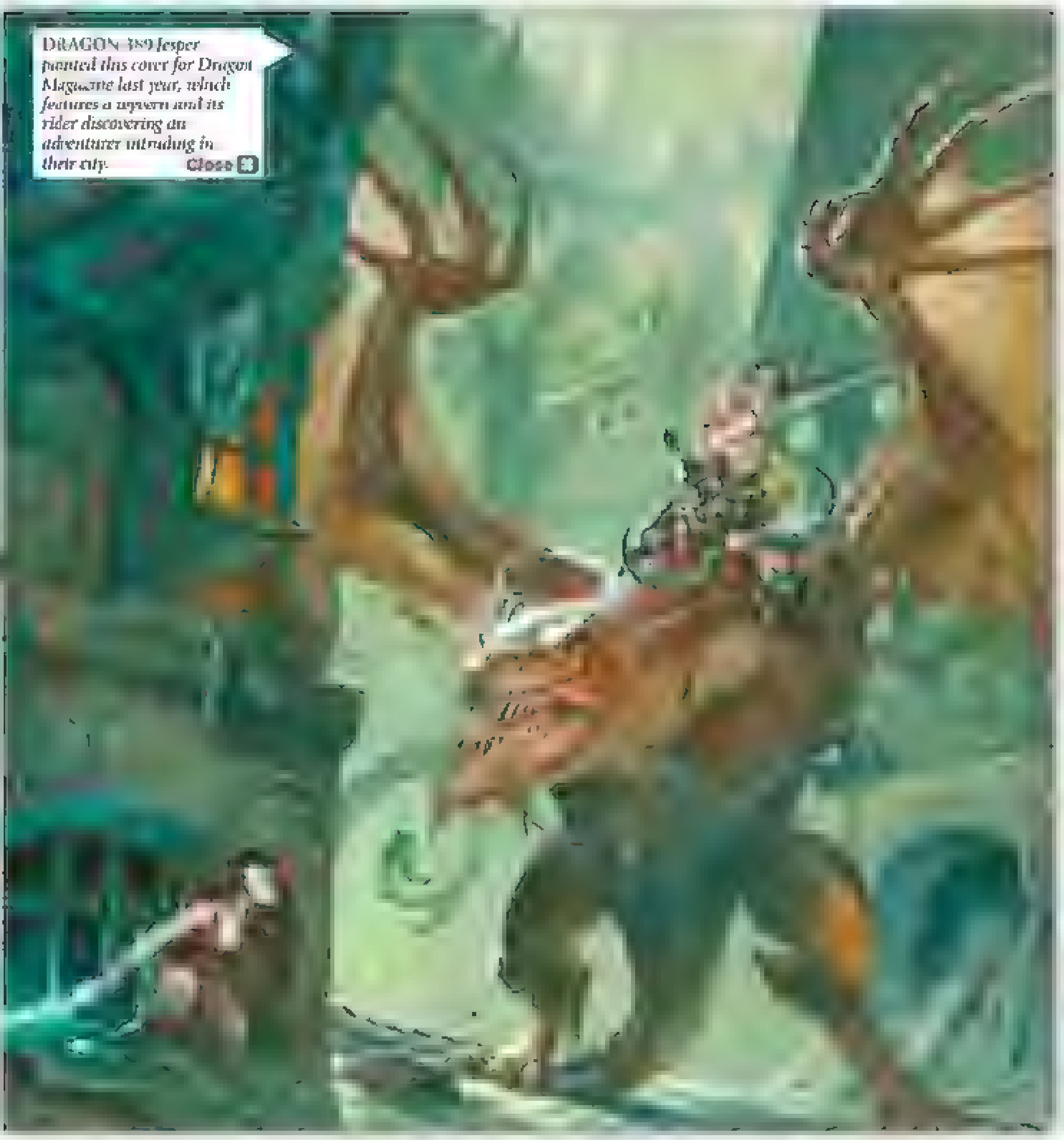
© 2010 Fantasy Flight Games

THE BIGGER PICTURE

One of Jesper's career milestones was painting for Dragon Magazine

Jesper used this opportunity to break new ground for himself as an artist and considers it a milestone – even though Dragon Magazine is now an online publication.

"It was the first time I thought I'd succeeded in making a huge setting piece [illegible] featuring multiple figures. It was almost like a movie scene," Jesper says. "Most fantasy is like a posing figure, like a fighter standing there looking cool, and it doesn't really tell a story or drag the spectator into the scene. But this painting did it for me. I was imagining [illegible] played myself in different scenarios. I've been in that city, I've been hiding from fighters or monsters who are searching for me, and that was the thing I had [illegible] the painting."



DRAGON 389 *Jesper painted this cover for Dragon Magazine last year, which features a wyvern and its rider discovering an adventurer intruding in their city.* Close

Comments

[illegible]
ImagineFX

"As an old-school AD&D player, I can appreciate Jesper's thoughts about this marvellous city encounter piece. His storytelling skills sell the scene – you can't help but want the adventurer to produce a winning saving throw!"

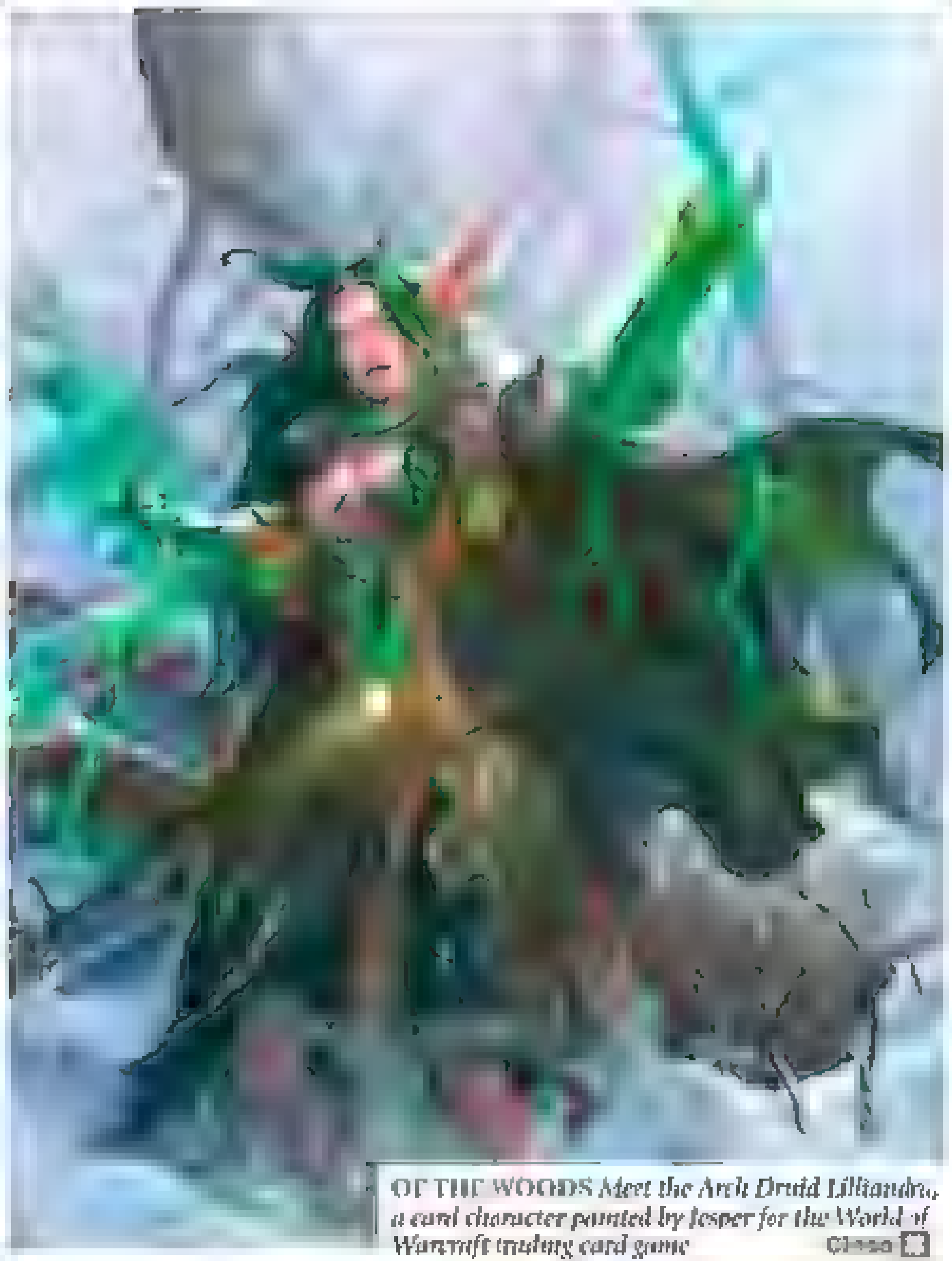
[illegible]

"The first thing that comes to mind looking at Jesper's painting is 'epic'. Superb composition and spectacularly ferocious-looking dragon. This is right out of a fantasy movie scene – one that I'd want to see!"

[illegible]
reader

"Jesper's distinctively attenuated style is instantly recognisable, due in part to his deeply thoughtful and thorough approach to constructing colour schemes. He's mastered colour and tone as few have – always vibrant, never garish. Add to that a wonderful feeling for movement, humour and composition, and Jesper's success is very understandable."

JESPER EJSING



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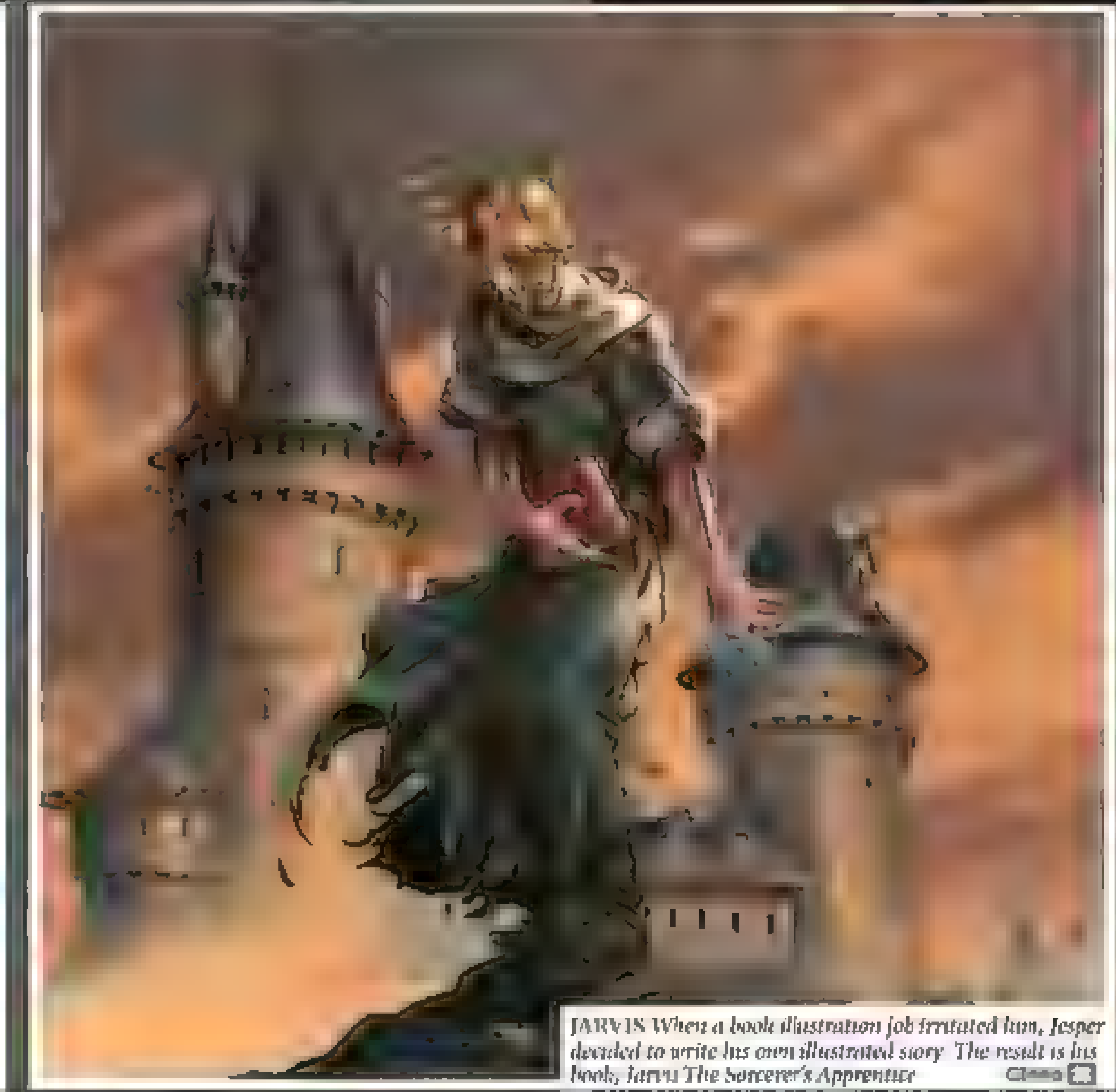
OF THE WOODS *Meet the Arch Druid Lilliandra, a card character painted by Jesper for the World of Warcraft trading card game* Close



JARVIS *When a book illustration job irritated him, Jesper decided to write his own illustrated story. The result is his book, Jarvis The Sorcerer's Apprentice* Close

gaming cards, book and magazine covers, and various other fantasy tasks. Some recent pieces to look out for include two covers he's done for Atari, which is launching an online game based on D&D. Both are battle scenes, with all kinds of action going on.

"I tried to capture the moment of battle where the viewer isn't too sure about which side is winning. One of them is a very bloody/fleshy, bleeding demon against a griffon, and the griffon's female wizard rider. The griffon is screaming and wood splinters are flying through the air. I really like that kind of scene," Jesper says.

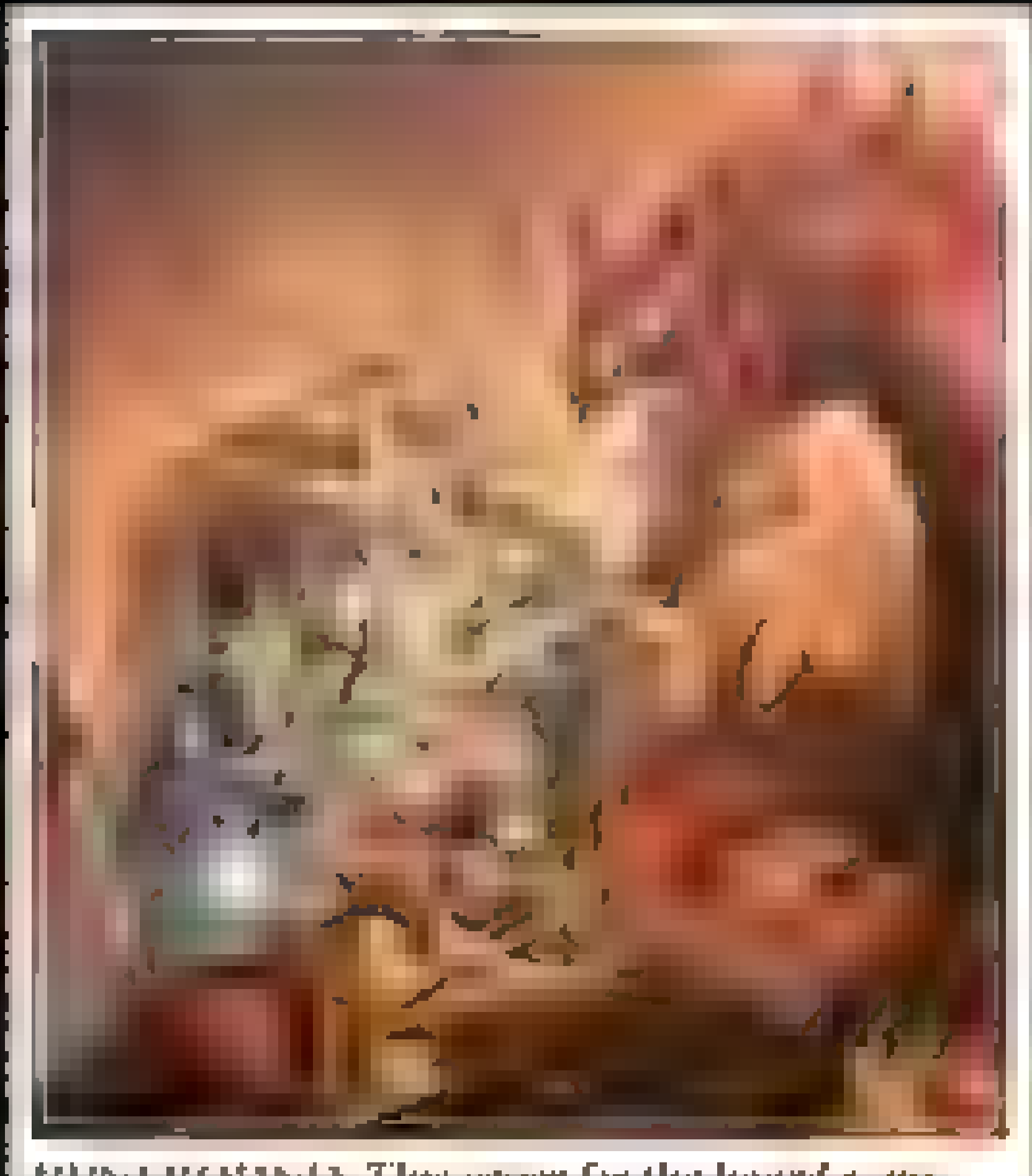
The artist paints traditionally using acrylic on board. Jesper's tried digital, but for him it lacks honesty. By painting something tangible, he creates an original that can be sold to fans or collectors. He likes the idea that a one-off is hanging somewhere, being admired by its owner.

His technique is to block out the shading in blacks, greys and whites, then adds colour tones. For a cover, the whole process takes about 10 days. "I start adding paint from dark to light, building up towards the light, so in reality, I block a lot of colours in on top of my drawing very fast so I can almost see the finished painting in a darker version of what it's going to end up like, and then I add highlights all around and then bahdah, it's done," Jesper says.

[illegible]

As it turns out, Jesper's one of the few fantasy artists we've interviewed who's written his own book. Unhappy with how a story he was illustrating was going, he complained to the editor, who promptly challenged him to come up with his own. So he did, and Jarvis the Sorcerer's Apprentice was the result. Having toiled over the words, he didn't want to illustrate it at first, but nor could he leave it to someone else. Still, he says he hates the outcome.

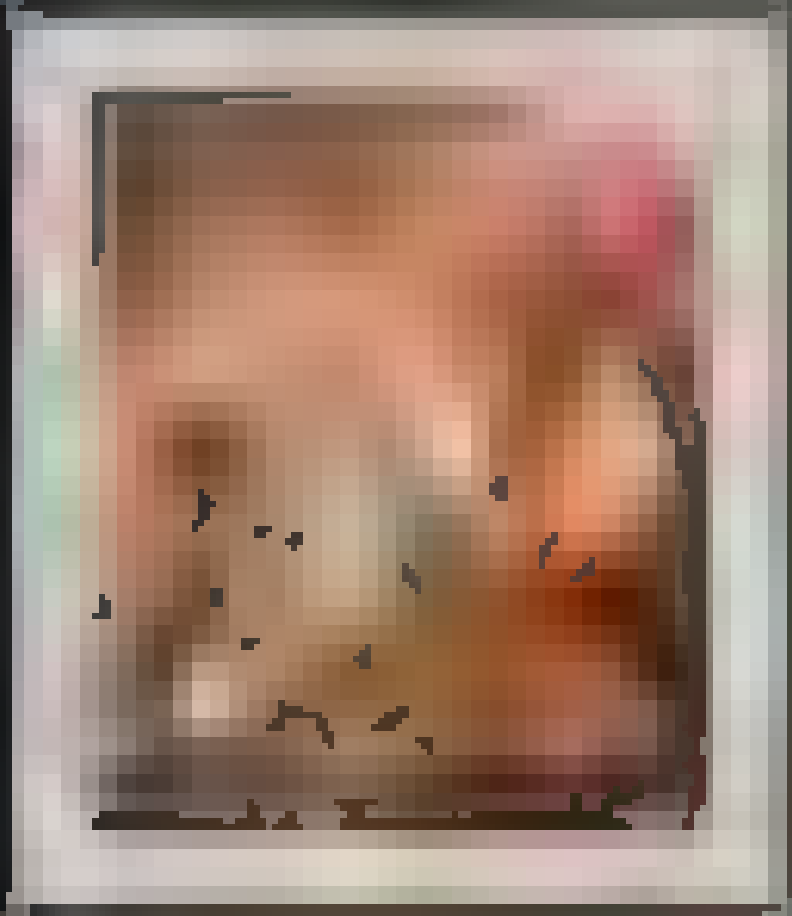
Perhaps it's inevitable Jesper's a little self-critical, given how hard he works to achieve believability in his art. "Even though I'm painting dragons and half-nude barbarian girls, I'm still taking it very seriously. That's important to me, to be able to pull people into my world," he says. And if he keeps giving us such incredible imagery, we're inclined to say the Danes can keep those Anglo-Saxon coins.

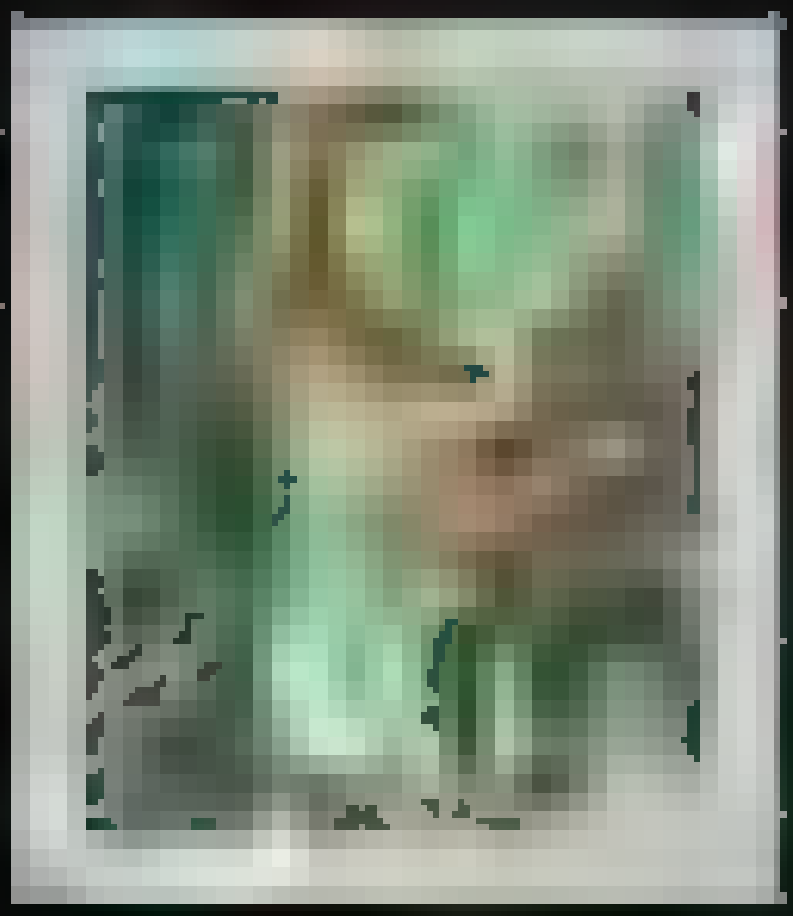


© 2010 Wizards of the Coast

RUNEBOUND *This cover for the board game Runebound was one of the first in which Jesper painted several full figures facing a foe* Close

Gallery





Development sheet

PROJECT TITLE: CENTIPEDE DEMON

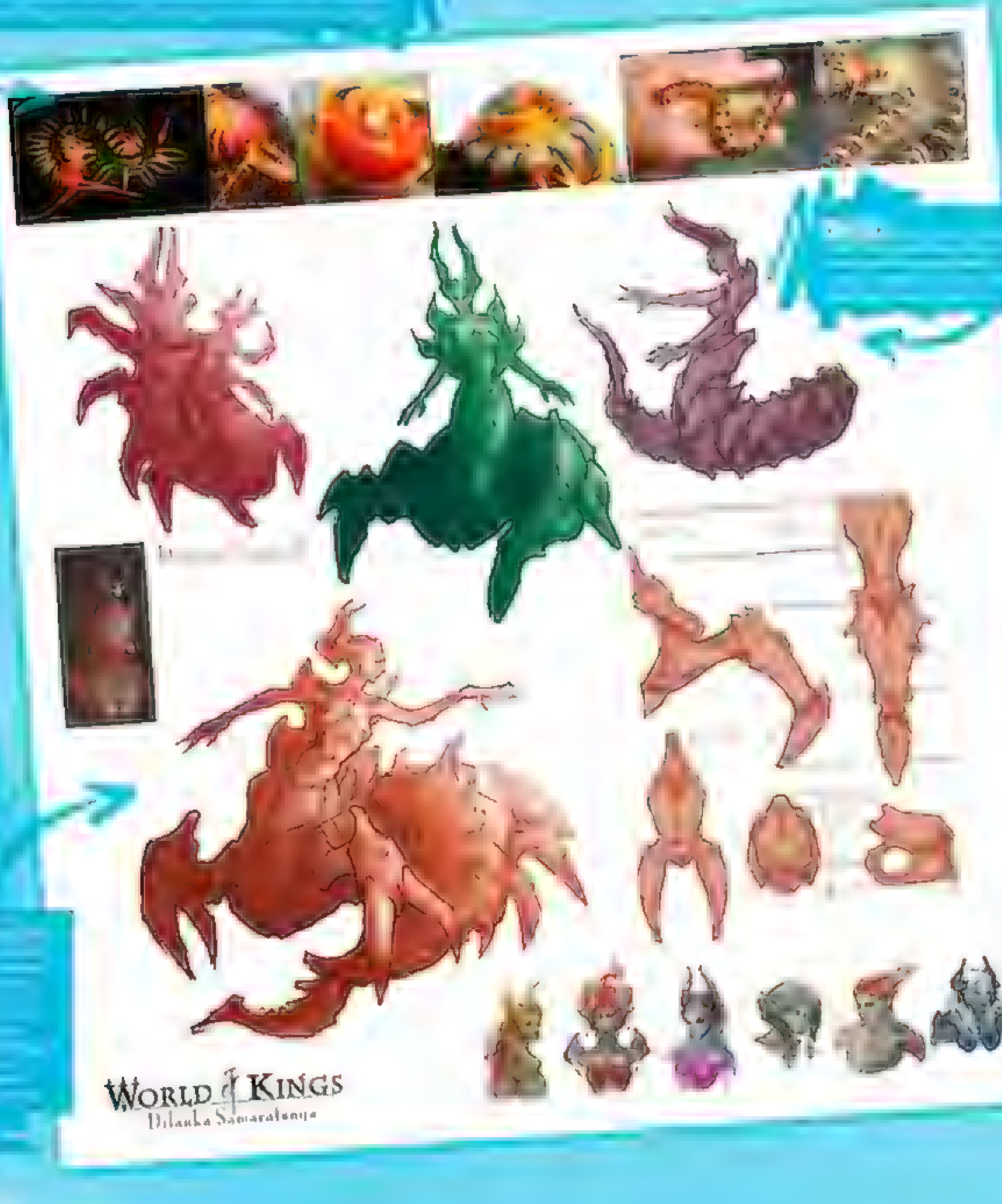
Created for a personal project, **Dilanka Samaratunga** collected some crab and centipede reference photos, then used his sketch skills and ZBrush to come up with an insectoid demon design

PROFILE

Dilanka Samaratunga

A recent graduate of Los Angeles' Art Center, Dilanka has started a concept artist job at Joe Madureira's video game studio, Vigil Games, home to art-led games such as Darksiders and upcoming Dark Millennium Online, which draws on the rich universe of Warhammer 40,000.

www.dilankaart.blogspot.com



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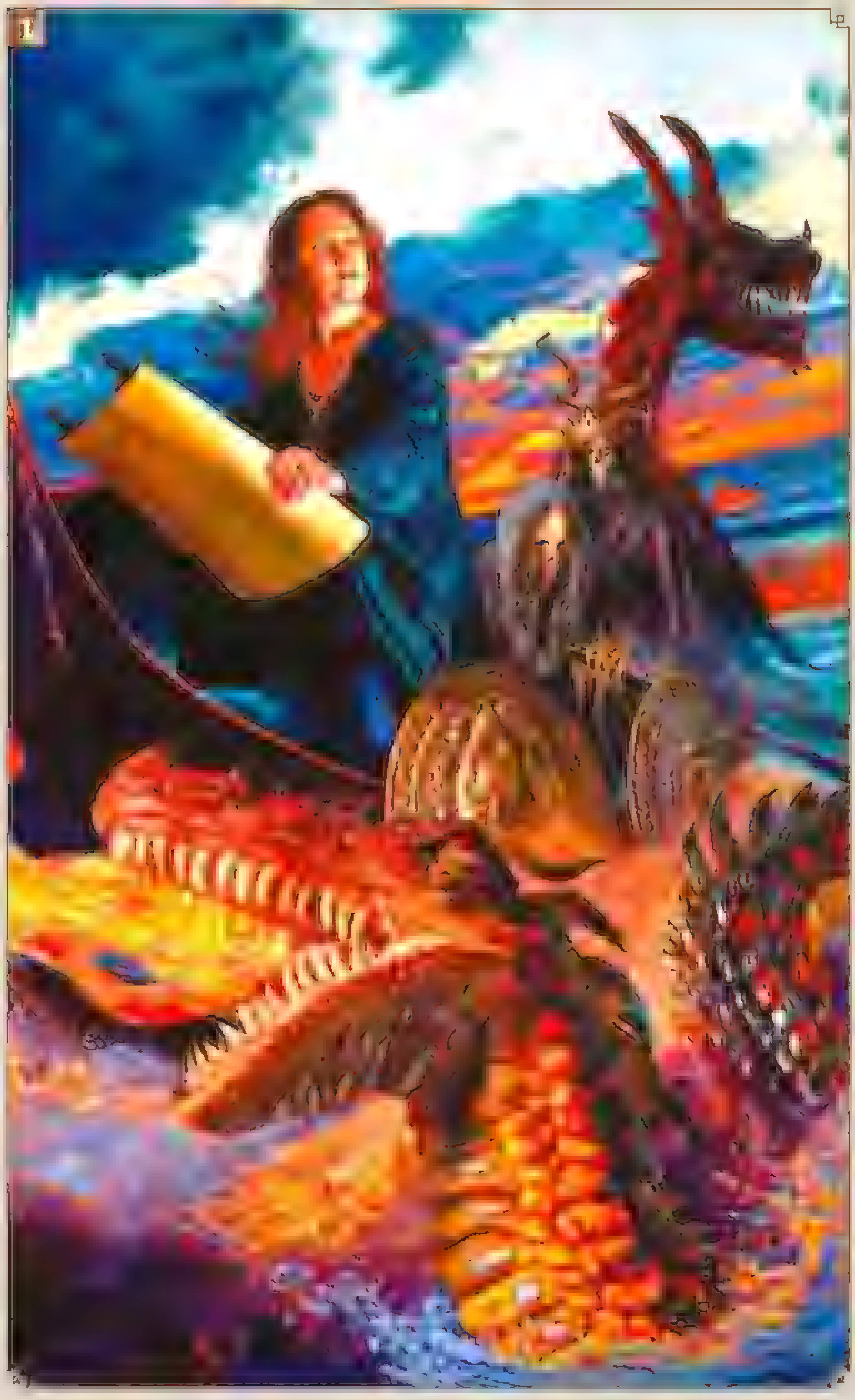
David Leri
US
www.daveleri.com
daveleri@aol.com

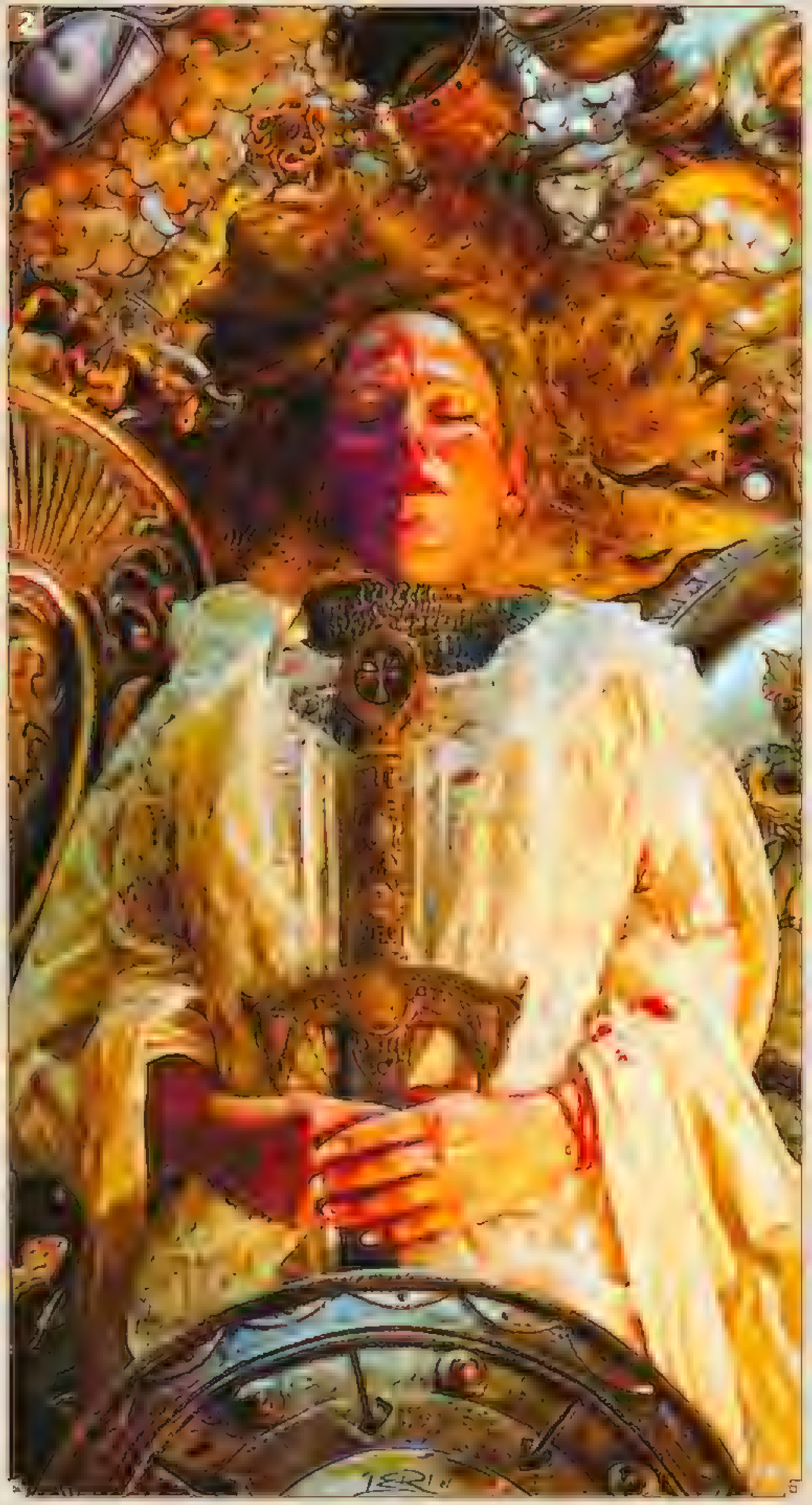
Dave Leri has been working as a freelance illustrator and sculptor since 1996. "I began my career painting images for book interiors and collectable card games," he says. "Eventually I began creating illustrations for magazines, role-playing games and book covers."

He currently resides in Columbus, Ohio, where he graduated from the Columbus College of Art & Design, studying 3D illustration. "That was a great foundation for me," he tells us, "which involved sculpting and casting pieces in foam, latex and resin." He still enjoys sculpting and frequently uses maquettes to help with the lighting in his paintings.



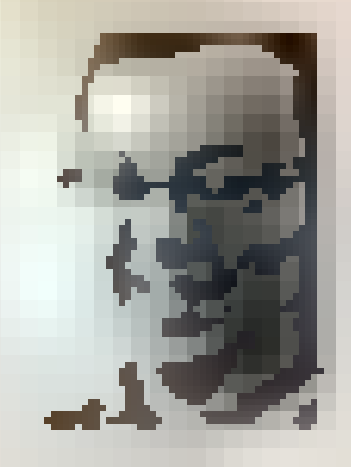
1

THE DEAD SEA SCROLL
18x24in oil on masonite
"This was originally going to be for a private commission, but when the economy imploded it fell through. I still liked the idea, so I asked my wife to pose for the princess and then sculpted a small maquette of the dragon to help with the lighting."



THE WHITE QUEEN
8.5x11in, oil on masonite
"This illustration was painted for a story in Realms of Fantasy magazine that was named Roger Lambelin. It was a lot of fun to work on as it gave me the chance to paint swords, shields, treasure and a beautiful woman. Who could ask for more?"

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"David's sculpting background shines through in his use of light. His paintings have a solidity to them even when lit with extraordinary colour, you just want to reach out and touch his Dead Sea dragon."
Ian Dean,
Deputy Editor

Rafael Sarmento

LOCATION: Brazil
WEB: http://rafsarmento.blogspot.com
EMAIL: rafabass@gmail.com
MEDIA: Graphite, acrylics, gouache, oils

A life filled with making all kinds of shapes using pens and pencils culminated with Rafael choosing to make a career out of it one year ago. "Now I'm a freelance illustrator and painter – I just take the media and play with it until I develop enough control to create the images I want," he says. A self-taught artist, the results are absolutely compelling.

"Previously, I've produced illustration for publications, games and so on, but I'm much more focused on paintings and experimental art now, because I aspire to get into the gallery scene some day. That's my dream."

1

KING OF ENTHROPY
10x7in, graphite, gouache and acrylics on watercolour paper

"This is one of my, what I call, 'tradigital' pieces – hand-made drawings/paintings with a digital flavour. The original drawing was painted over with acrylics on a watercolour paper. I then scanned it along with some extra painted textures and elements, and put these all together with the digital tools."

BLOSSOM
8.25x10.75in, graphite and acrylics on watercolour paper

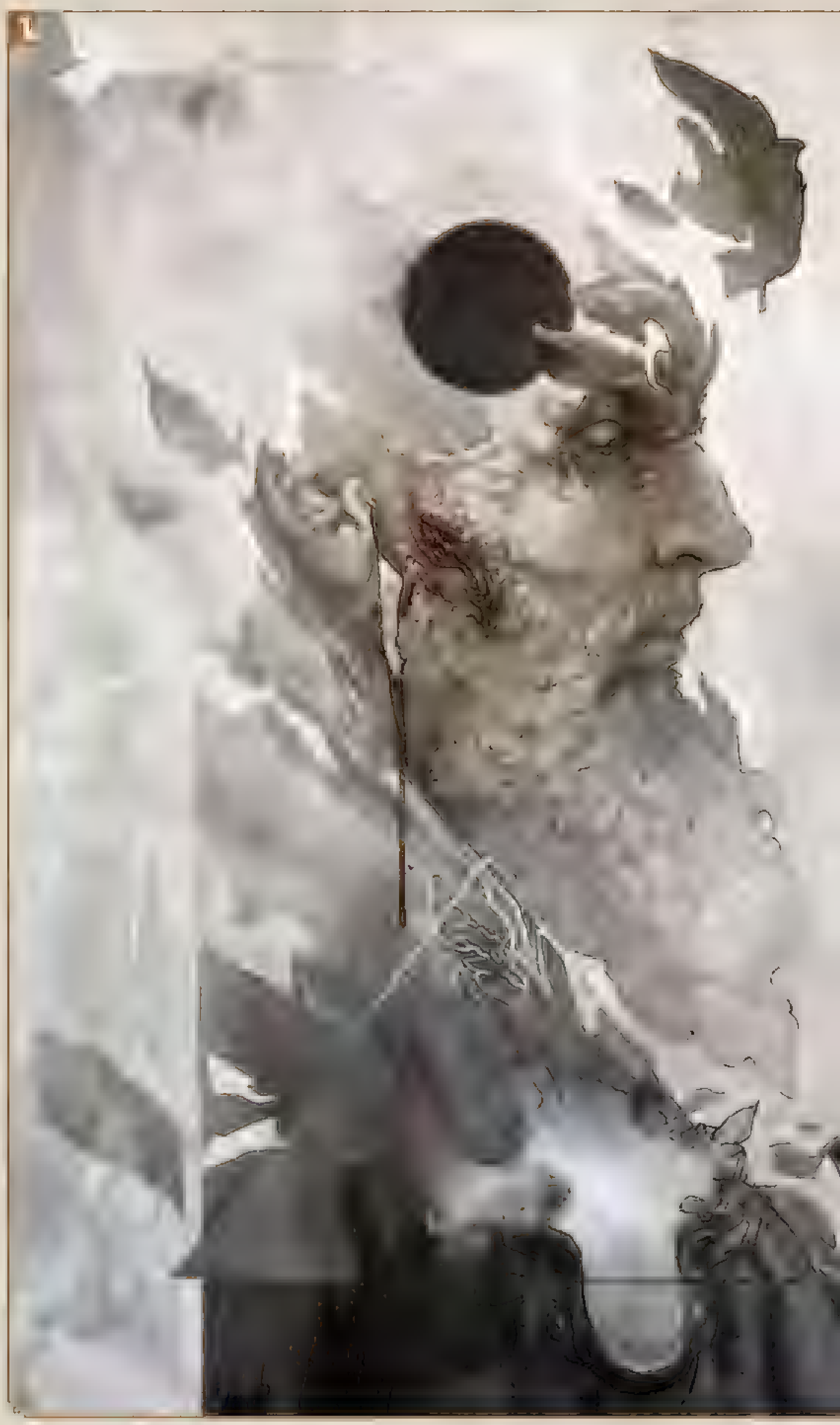
"This piece represents a whole new way of thinking and working on illustration for me, conceptually and technically, apart from the digital works. The blossom was done with graphite and acrylics on watercolour paper, and I tweaked it a bit on the computer."

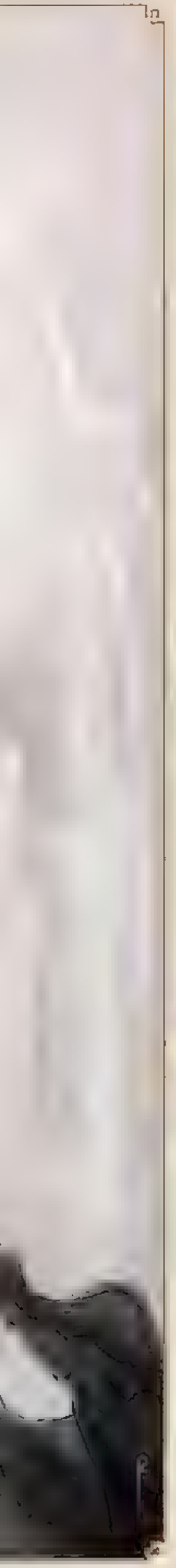
FRAGMENTAL #1
10x7in, gouache and acrylics on paper

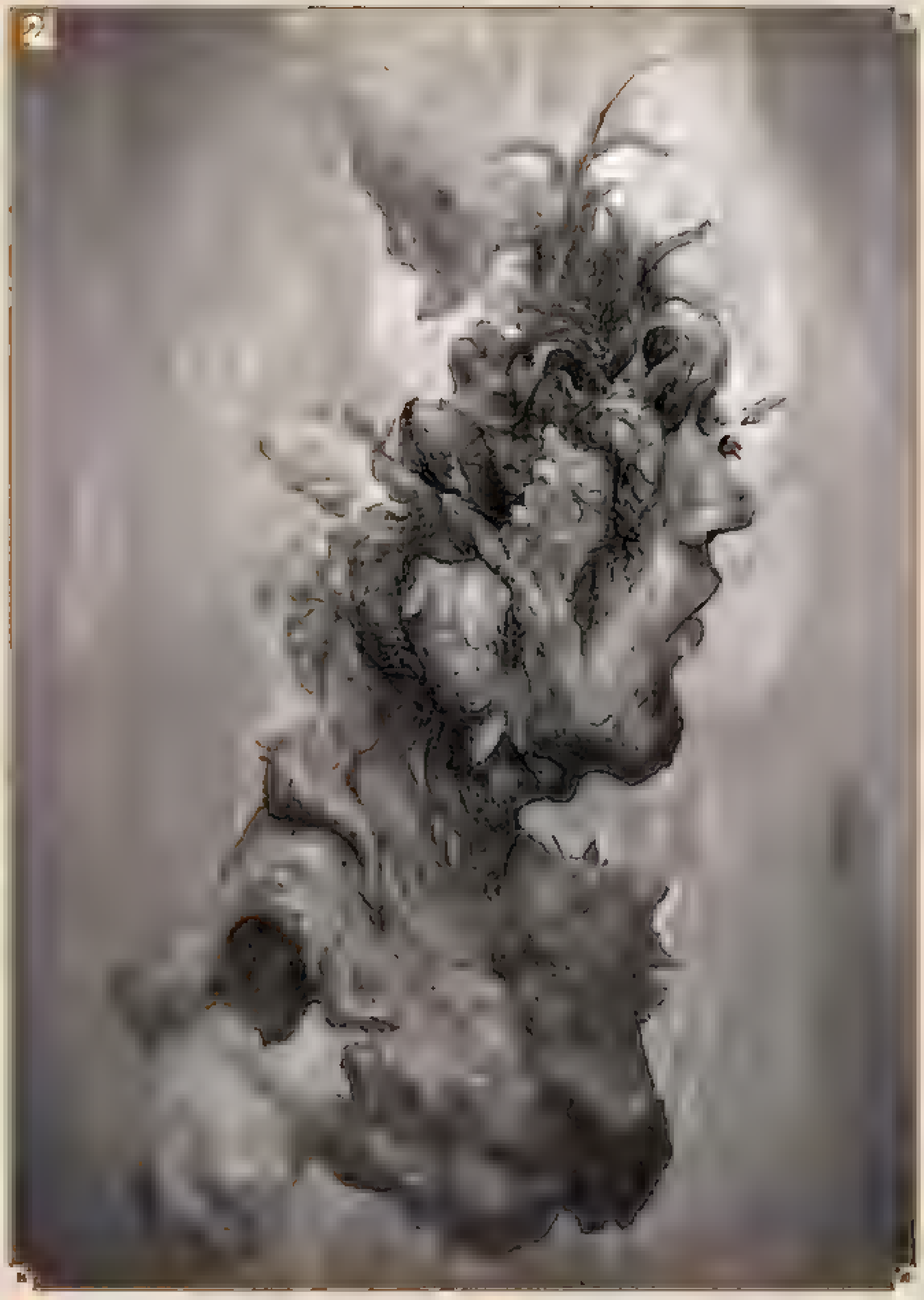
"This was done as a study, with acrylics and gouache on my sketchbook. I enjoy working with recurring themes and fragmented minds just have this appeal for me, although I'm getting to explore this further in another direction now."

THE CLAIRVOYANT
10x7in, oil and acrylics on board

"I painted this piece for the Power In Numbers show at Gallery Nucleus, as an attempt to contribute to the Red Cross relief effort for Japan. This was also an experiment for a body of work that I'm starting to develop."







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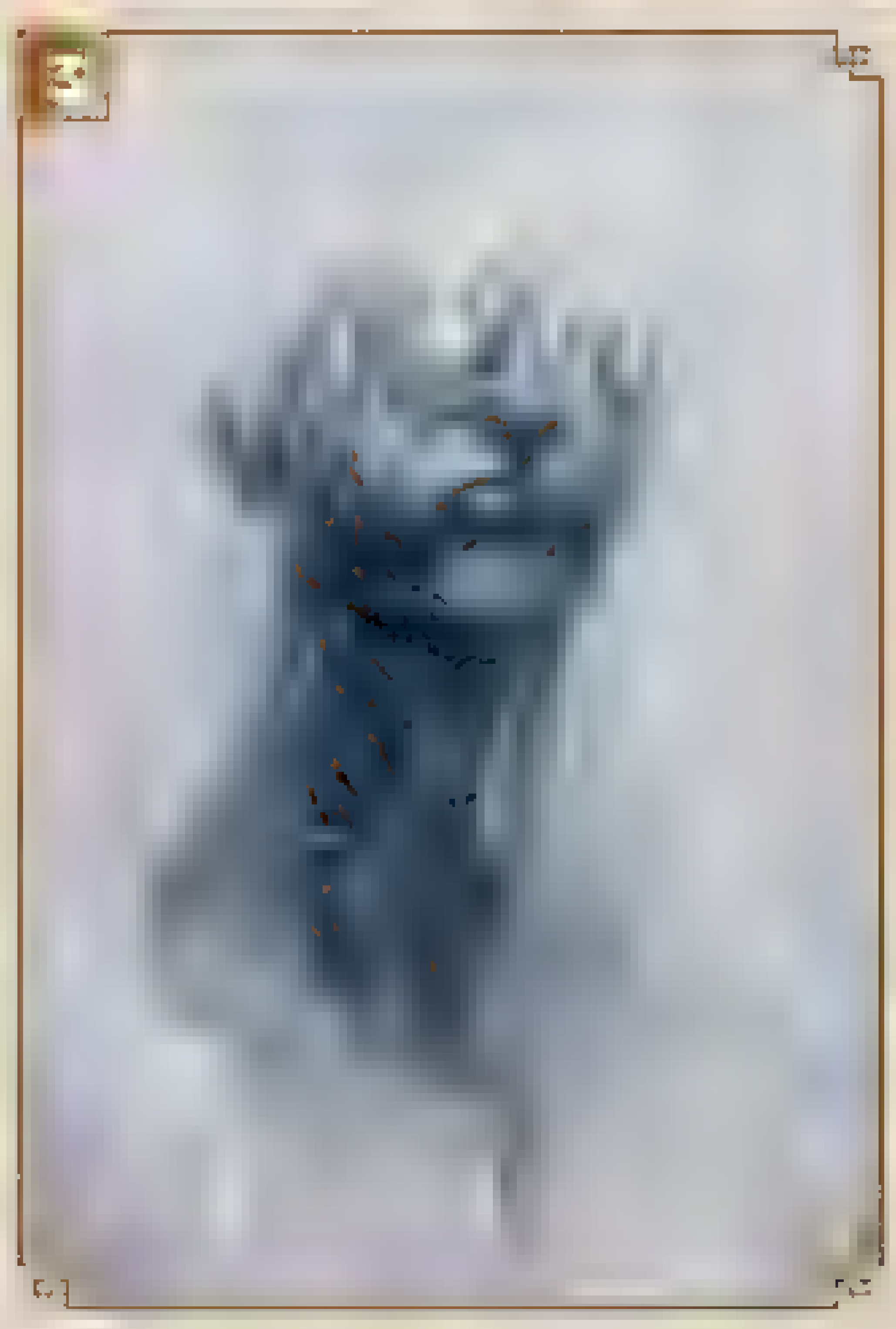

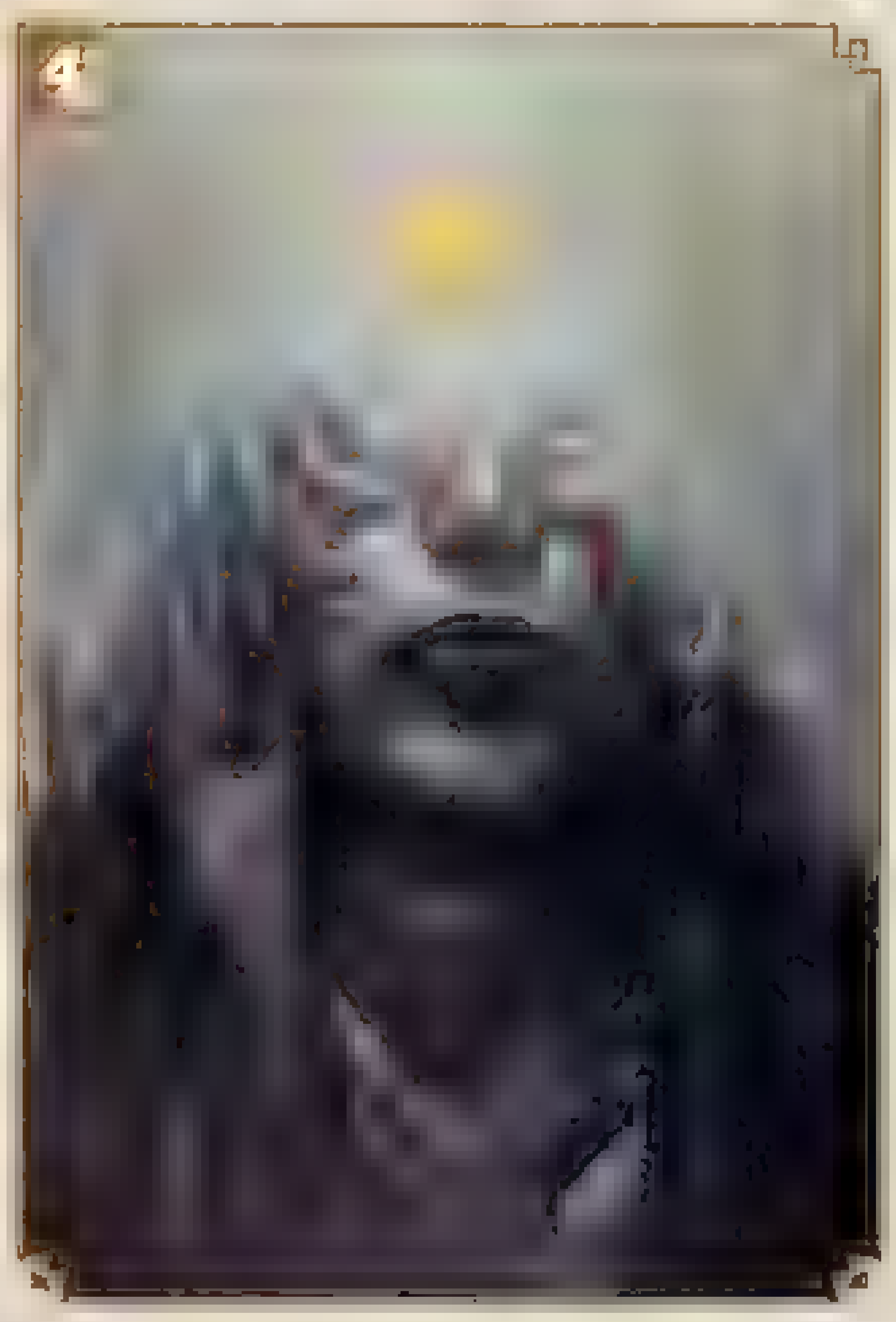

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Rafael's rich textures make his macabre images feel almost fungal. His subjects decompose off the canvass, but he still manages to find a sombre beauty in all of that decay."

Beren Neale, Staff Writer

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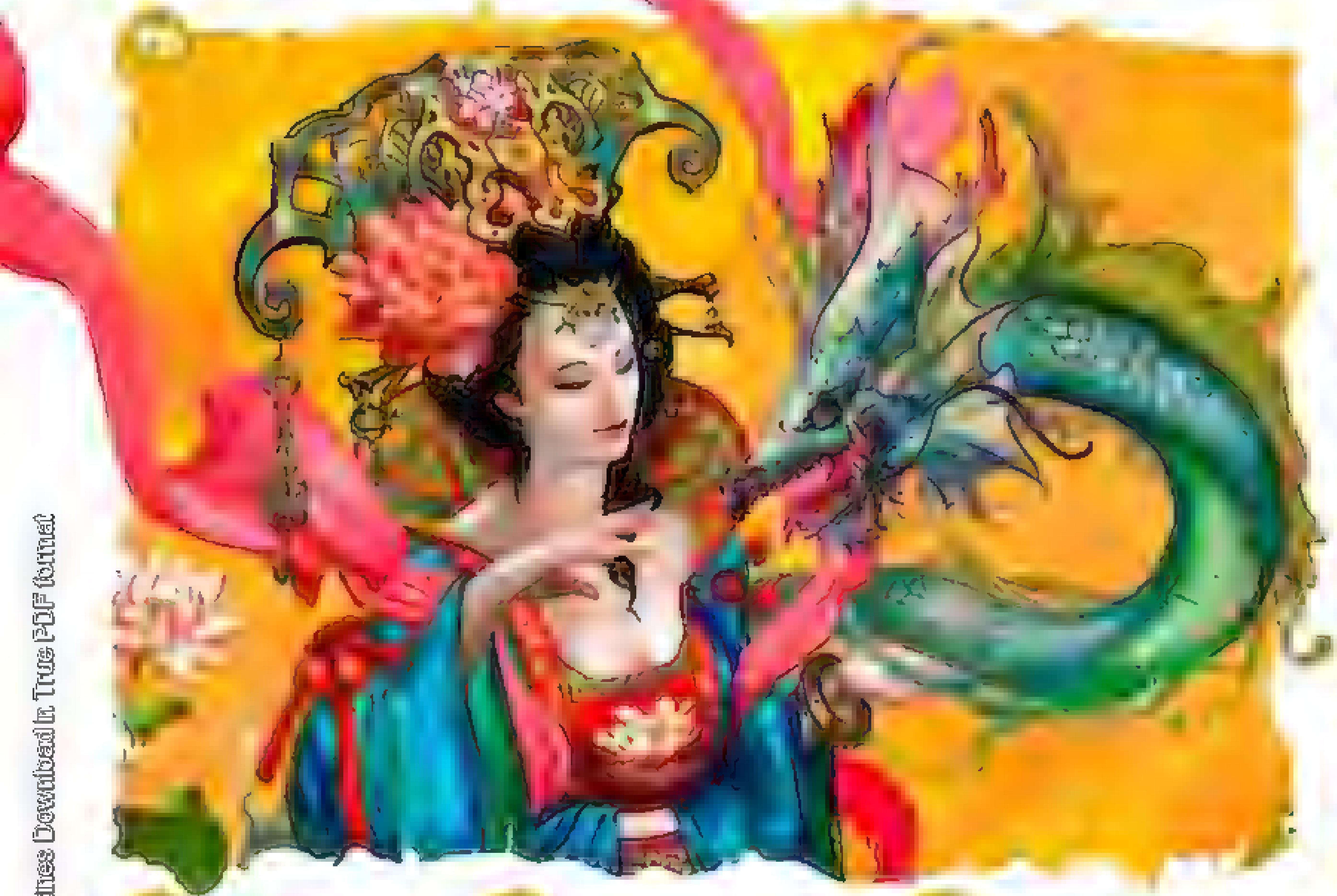
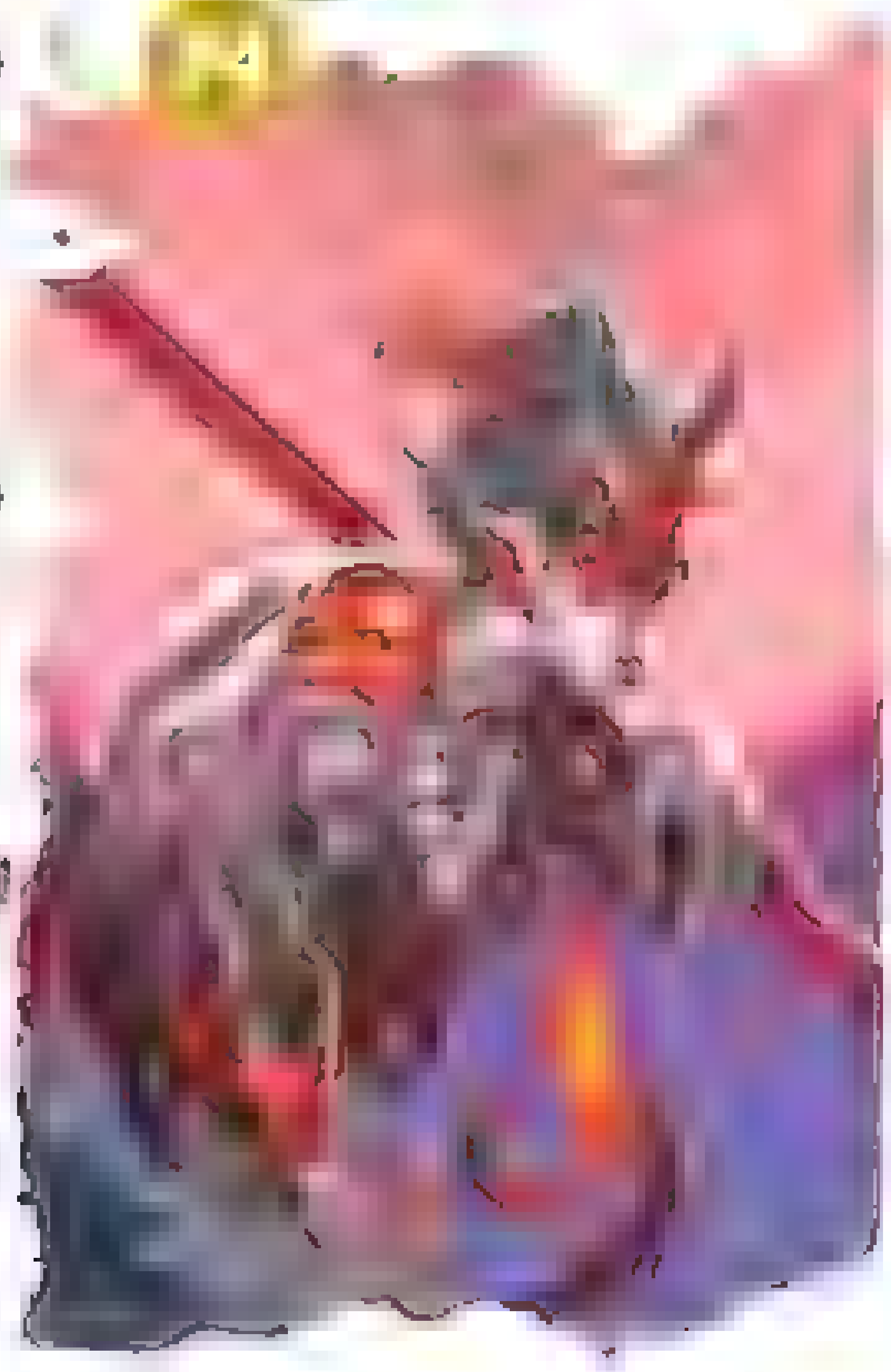
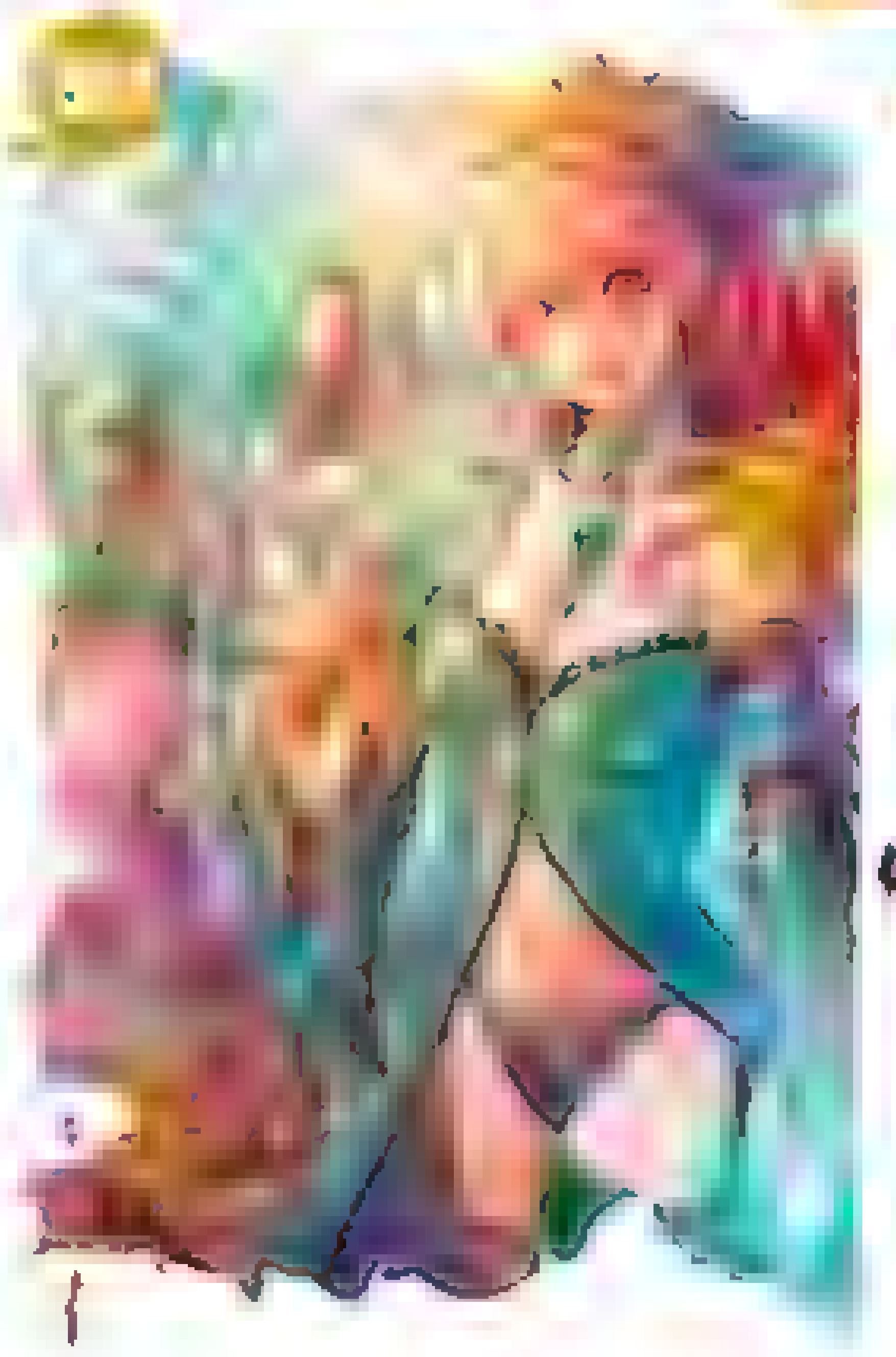
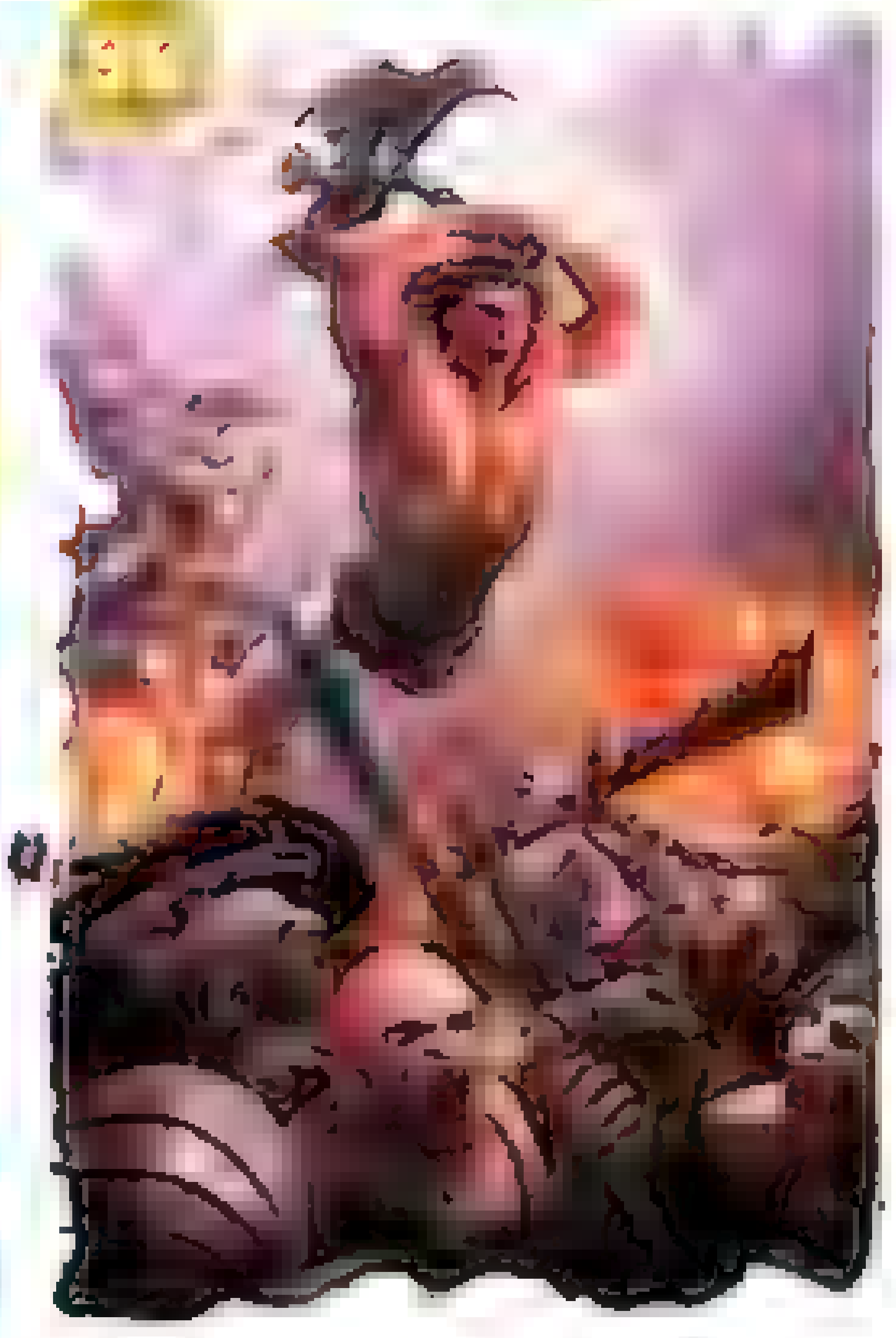








This issue:

Paint a fantasy Asian figure
Lorland Chen's cover image has both beauty and realism.

The Monkey King at moonlight
The popular character from Chinese mythology is recreated by Jesper Ejsing.

Compose your manga characters
Hiro Usuda demonstrates how to draw a small crowd scene in the manga style.

Create an epic dragon scene
Ruan Jia demonstrate his subtle colouring techniques.

Reimagining a fantasy classic
Young-june Choi paints a centaur in a new light.

Pose and paint a barbarian
Sam Kennedy uses DAZ Studio to help him compose a rip-roaring fight scene

Navigation and workflow hints
Painter 12's navigation tools enhance your workflow, says Simon Dominic.

Quickly create a vibrant scene
Yap Kun Rong creates a colourful environment.

Photoshop

PAINT A FANTASY ASIAN FIGURE

This month's cover image is beautiful and intriguing, but it's also underscored with realism. **Lorland Chen** shows how he did it

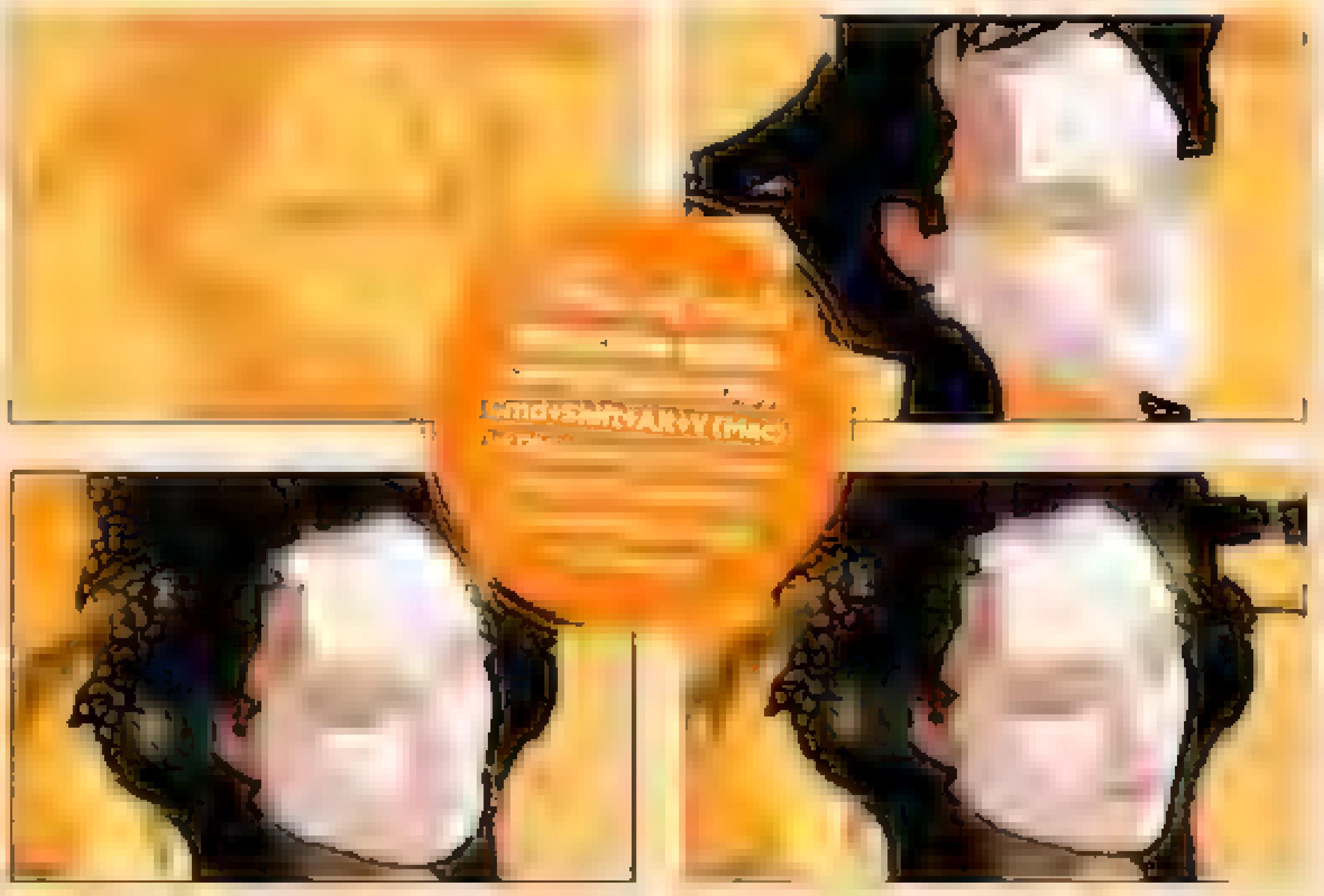
Before I start my work, I always produce several concepts. Then I compare them to decide which one is my favourite. When I make concepts maybe you call yours sketches or drafts the principle is always thus: never think, just assemble. Lots of artists like to make up images in their minds, but I use Photoshop to create concepts, because I think it's a more efficient process. I like to use reference pictures to assemble a composition and I've built a database over time that I can quickly pick an image from. For good reference material, the contrast should be strong, the character should be outstanding and the topic should be very clear.

There's no need to waste time thinking too much about how to paint details, how to arrange the individual strokes and so on. Instead, just use the reference pictures to make up different versions as many as you can.

At this stage, remember two important things: more pictures, less painting; and create the concept image in greyscale.

Artist PROFILE

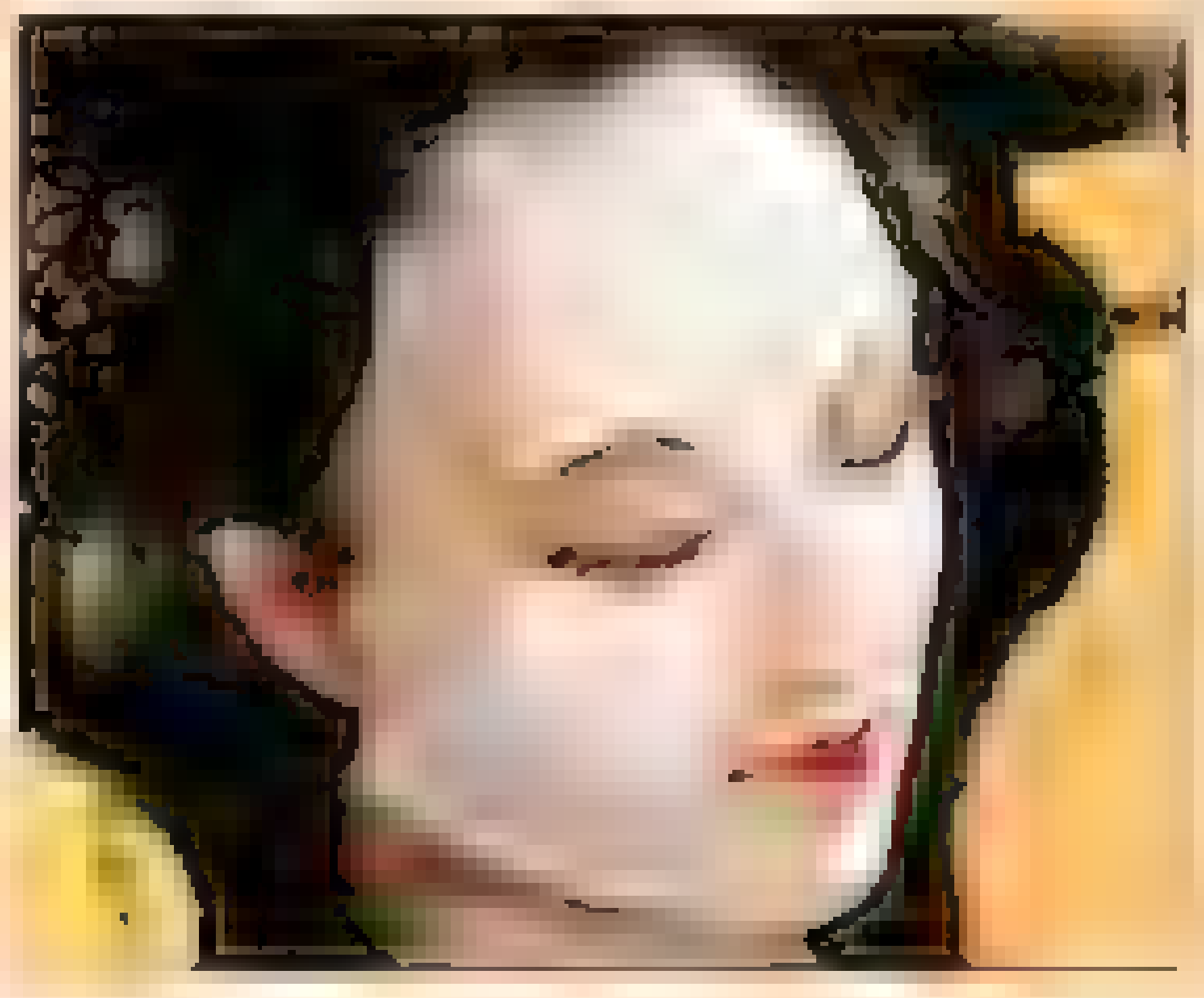
Workshops



Cmd+Shift+Alt+Y (Mac)

A head start

I begin with the head. As you see, I paint on a coloured background. This helps me acquire the colour tone easily. Remember, there is no bad colour, but there will always be bad colour matches. I set up the canvas with two layers one for the foreground, the other for the background and then start painting. First I use big blocks to simplify the face and then I gradually change to smaller size brushes, to add some lines and make the facial features clearer.

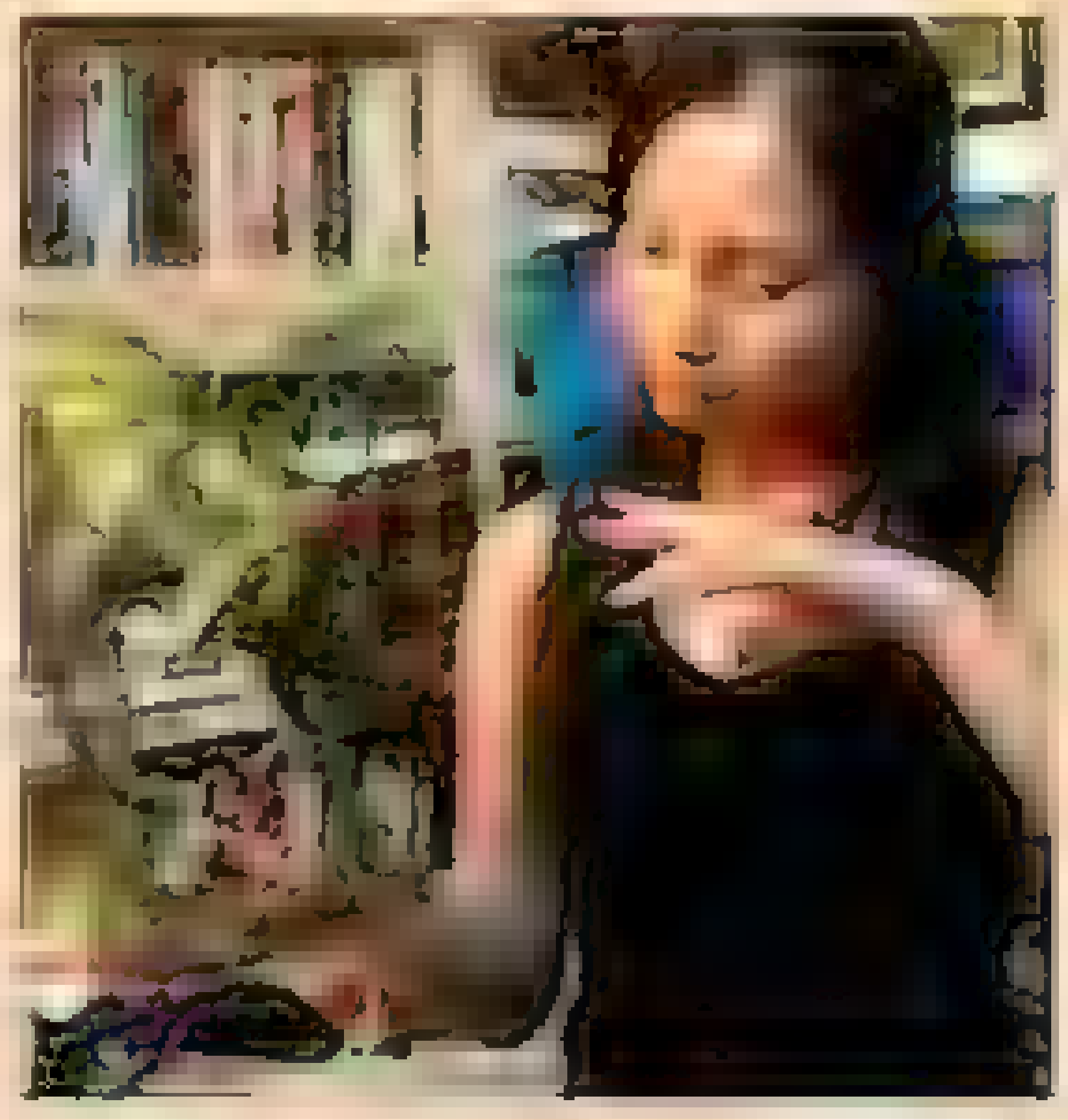


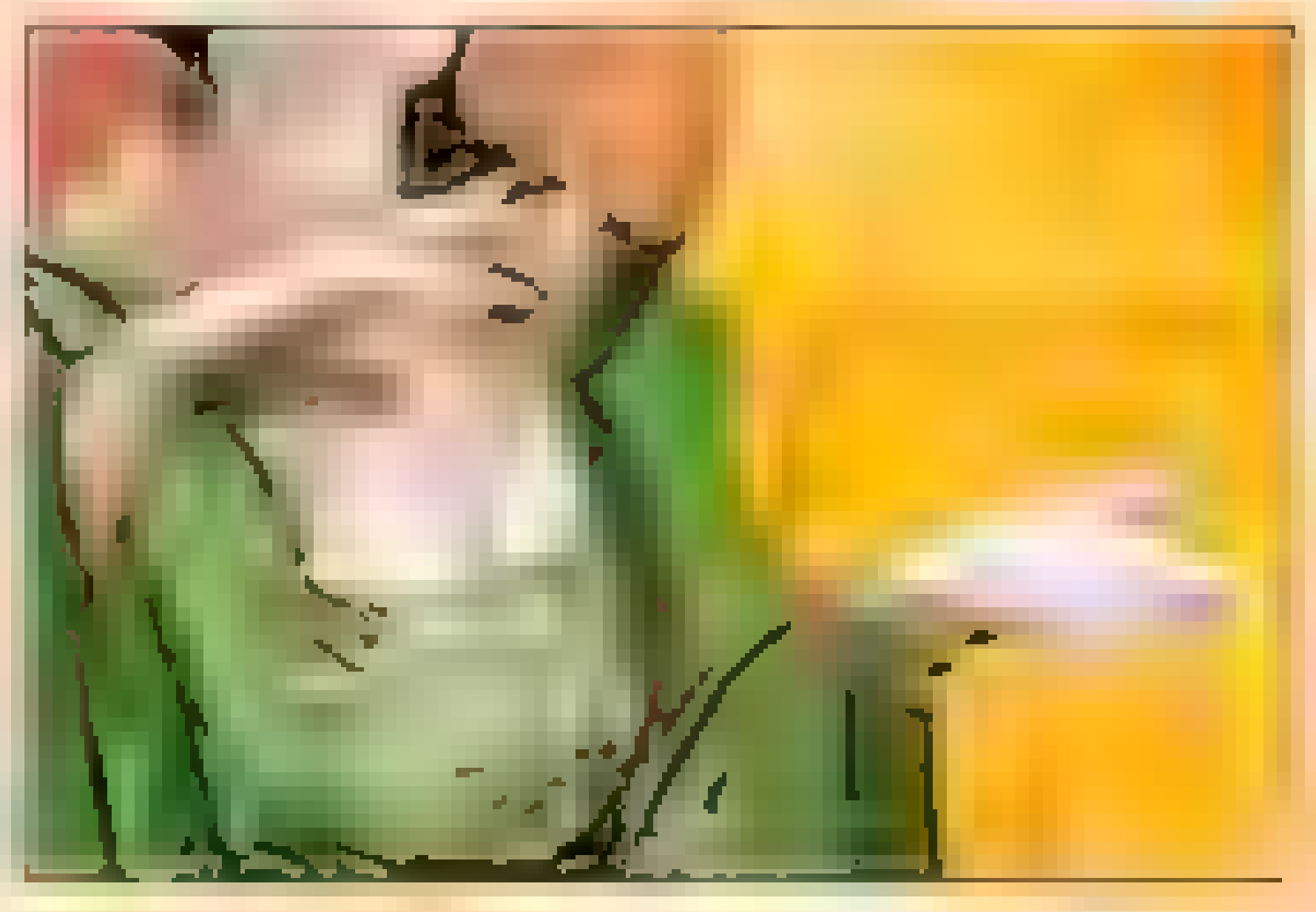
Adding makeup

I now start on the character's makeup, addressing the shape of her eyebrows, the colour of her lipstick, as well as blusher and eye shadow. If you put those four elements on a female face, it'll look more attractive. The highlights not only appear in every tip of an object, but also in some dark area and shadow lines. This can give her face a strong sense of transparency.

Model behaviour

I find it hard to paint a realistic pose from scratch, so I use a real-world reference. Here I invite my wife, Xuemin, to be my model. Before posing I show her the concept picture and explain the mood that I want to see on the canvas. To help things along I give Xuemin a dragon toy to hold. Paste the hands to the picture directly don't waste time drawing them as there's still plenty of work ahead. The purpose is to create realistic beauty, not to show off your ability





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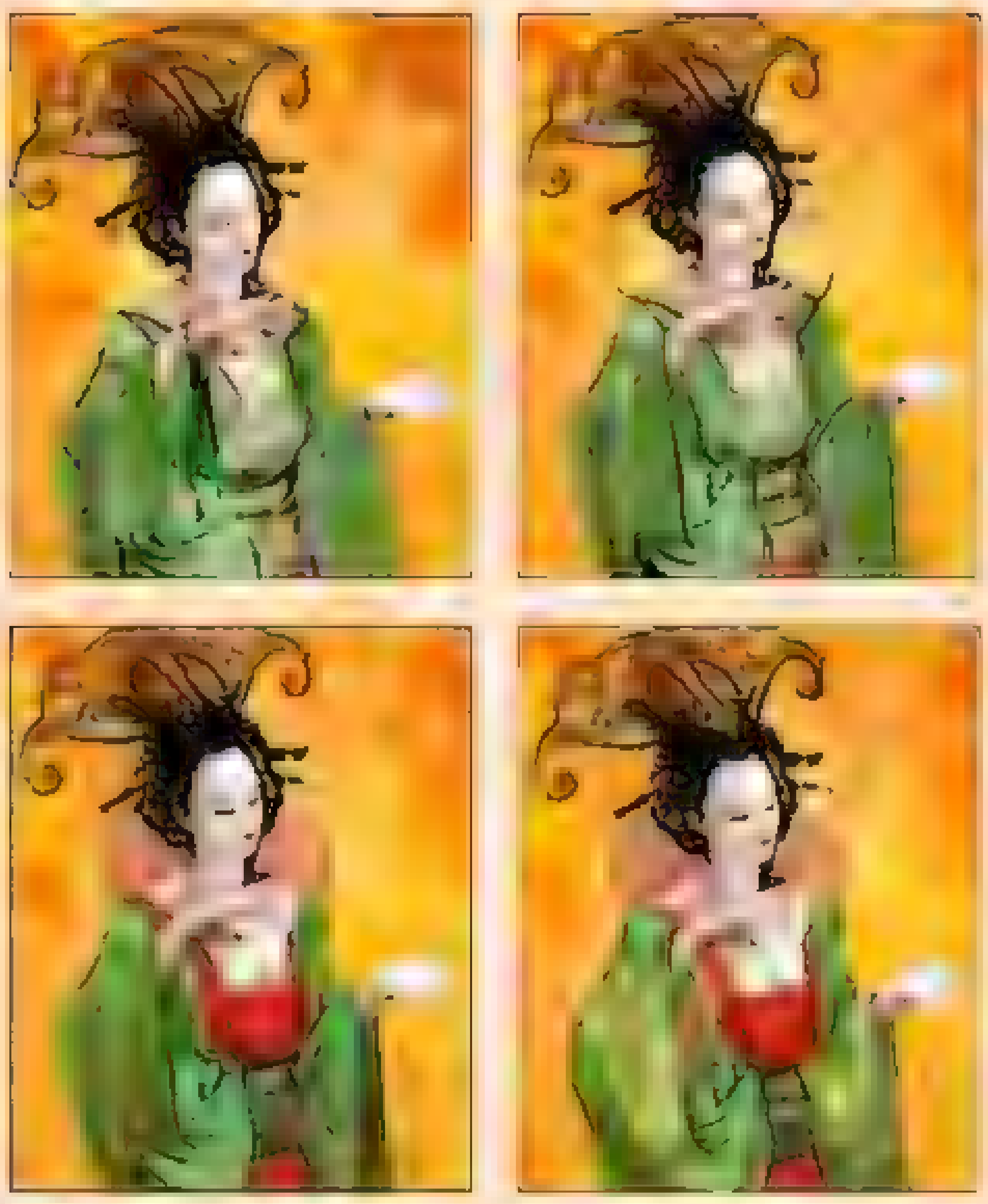


4 Adding texture

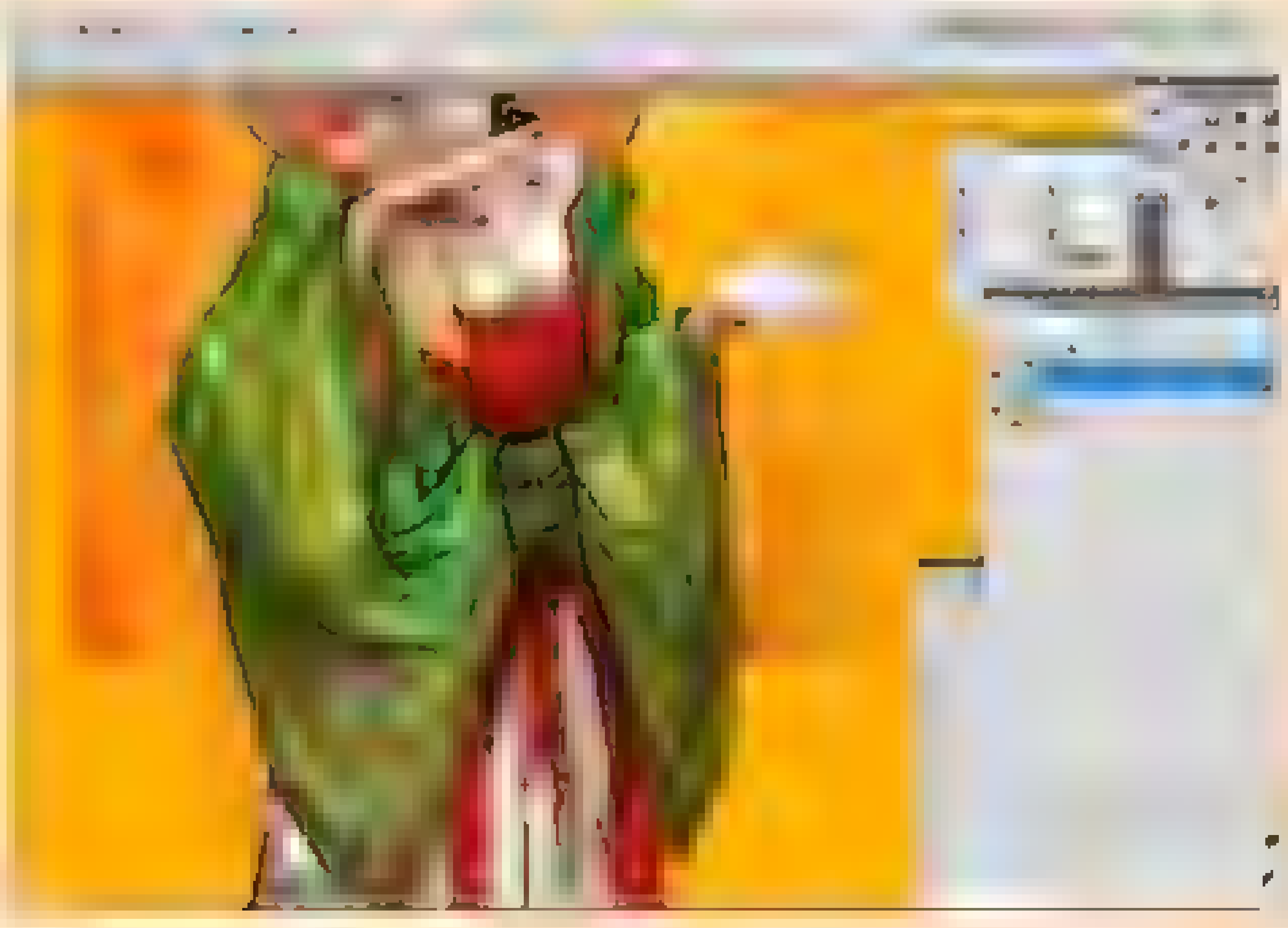
I use the Rough Dry Brush to add lots of dots for the background texture. When I colour the background, I don't use just one tone, but rather try many different tones, which can help to make the background rich in variation. I also follow the folds of clothing. I make some lines to emphasise the light effects, the variations in colour and the sense of volume. Here I use a shade of yellow to express the shadow, because the background is yellow, too

PRO SECRETS

[illegible]

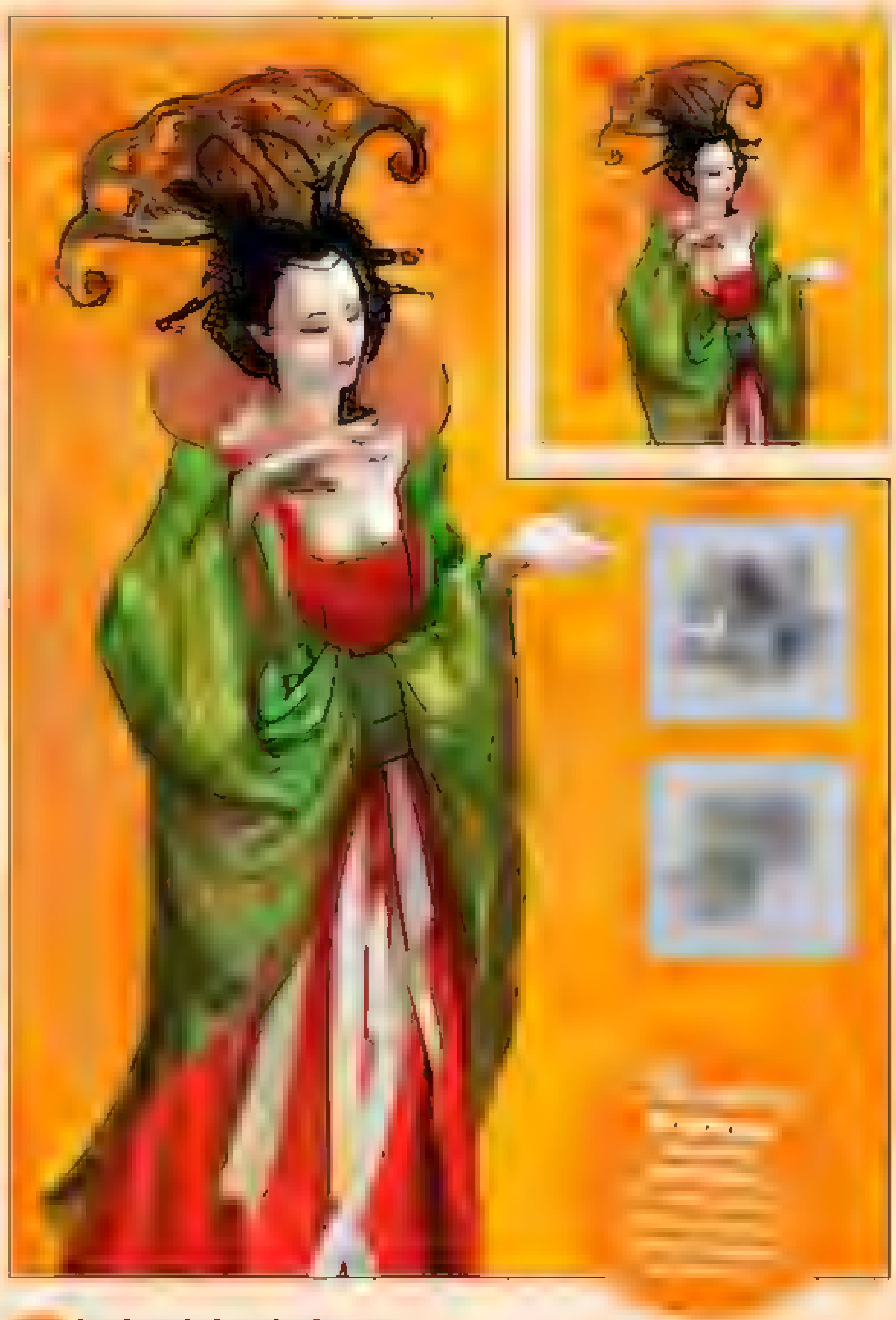
5 Expanding the composition

I use reference photos to assemble the costume and if some parts are hard to combine, I use the brushes to smear them together. There are three rules to making a good texture background: you need a colour (orange in this case); try different textured brushes to make the whole picture messy; and use a complementary colour (here it's green). I use the Smudge tool to smear the 'mess' about



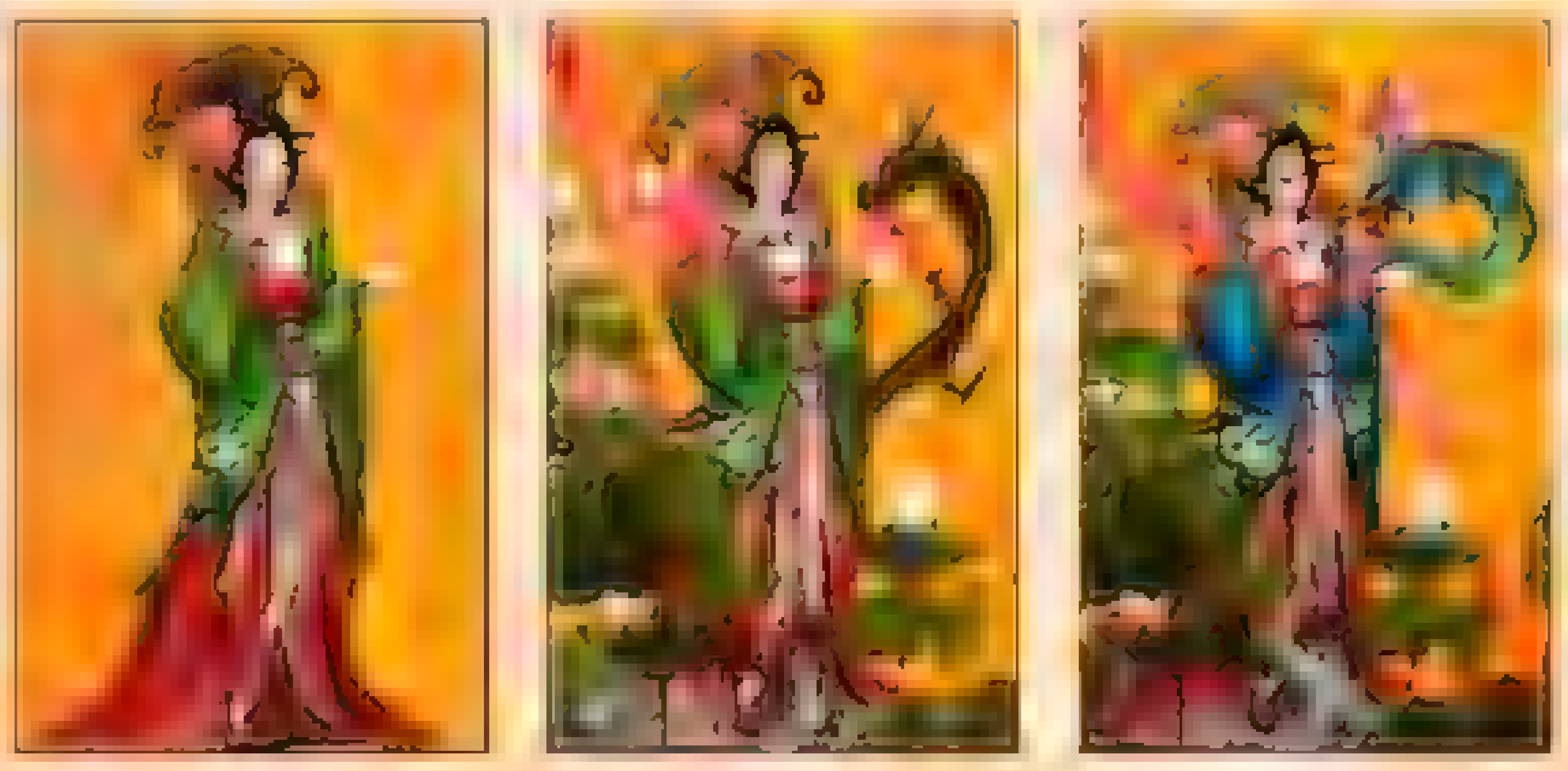
6 Texture brushes

I tend to use two typical textured brushes: a Dry Brush and a Natural Textured Brush. Once the background is full of texture, I then start to think about adding a water lily, lotus and other vegetation around the main character



7 Maintaining balance

These pictures show the whole creative process. Before I decide how to depict the details, I must know the logic of this piece. Which step is for which purpose? I tackle each part a bit at a time, so the elements of the painting are kept in balance with each other. Here, the editor advises me to change the costume to royal blue. It's a good idea because it makes the character stand out from the background more



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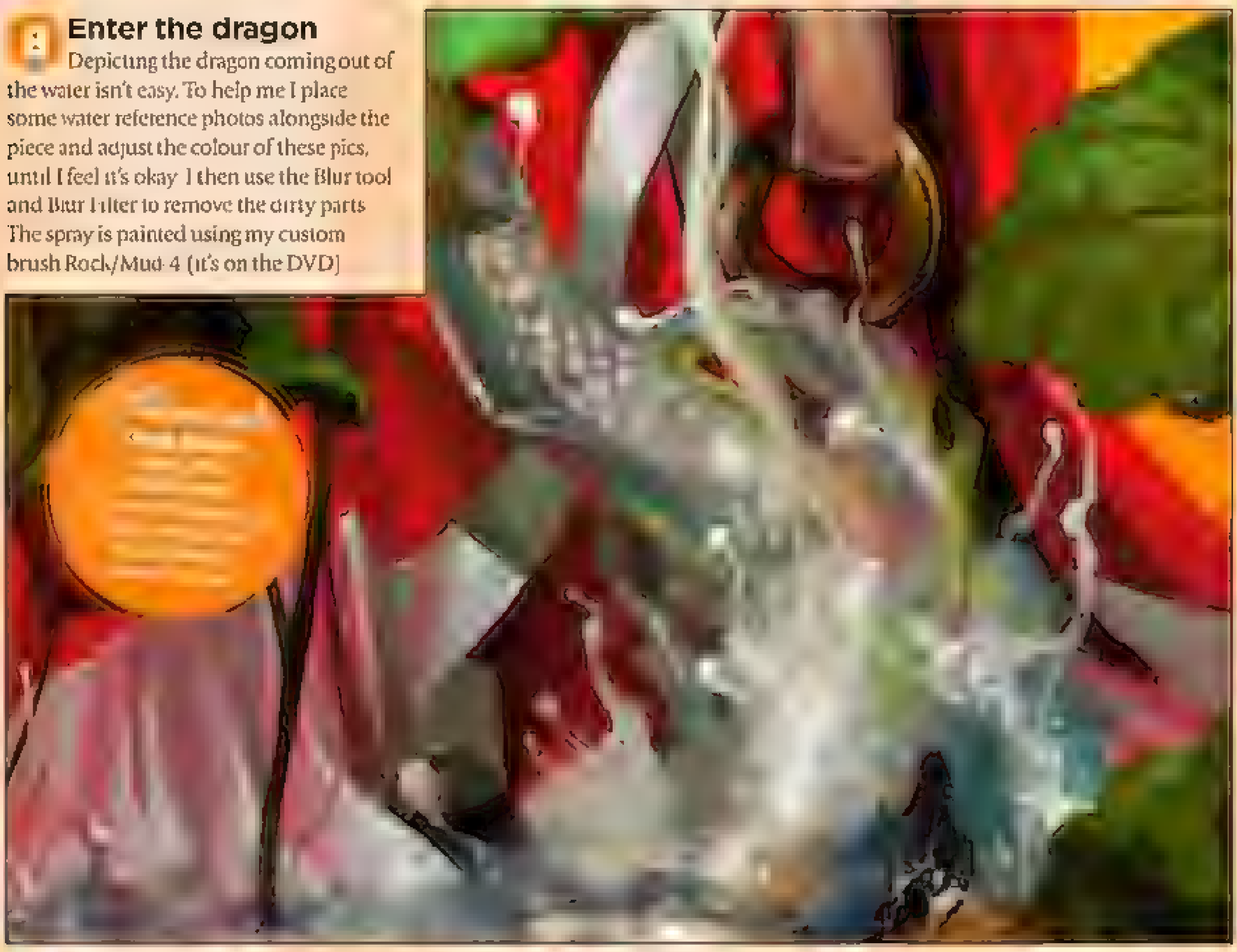
Enter the dragon

Depicting the dragon coming out of the water isn't easy. To help me I place some water reference photos alongside the piece and adjust the colour of these pics, until I feel it's okay. I then use the Blur tool and Blur Filter to remove the dirty parts. The spray is painted using my custom brush Rock/Mud 4 (it's on the DVD)



WORKSHOP BRUSHES

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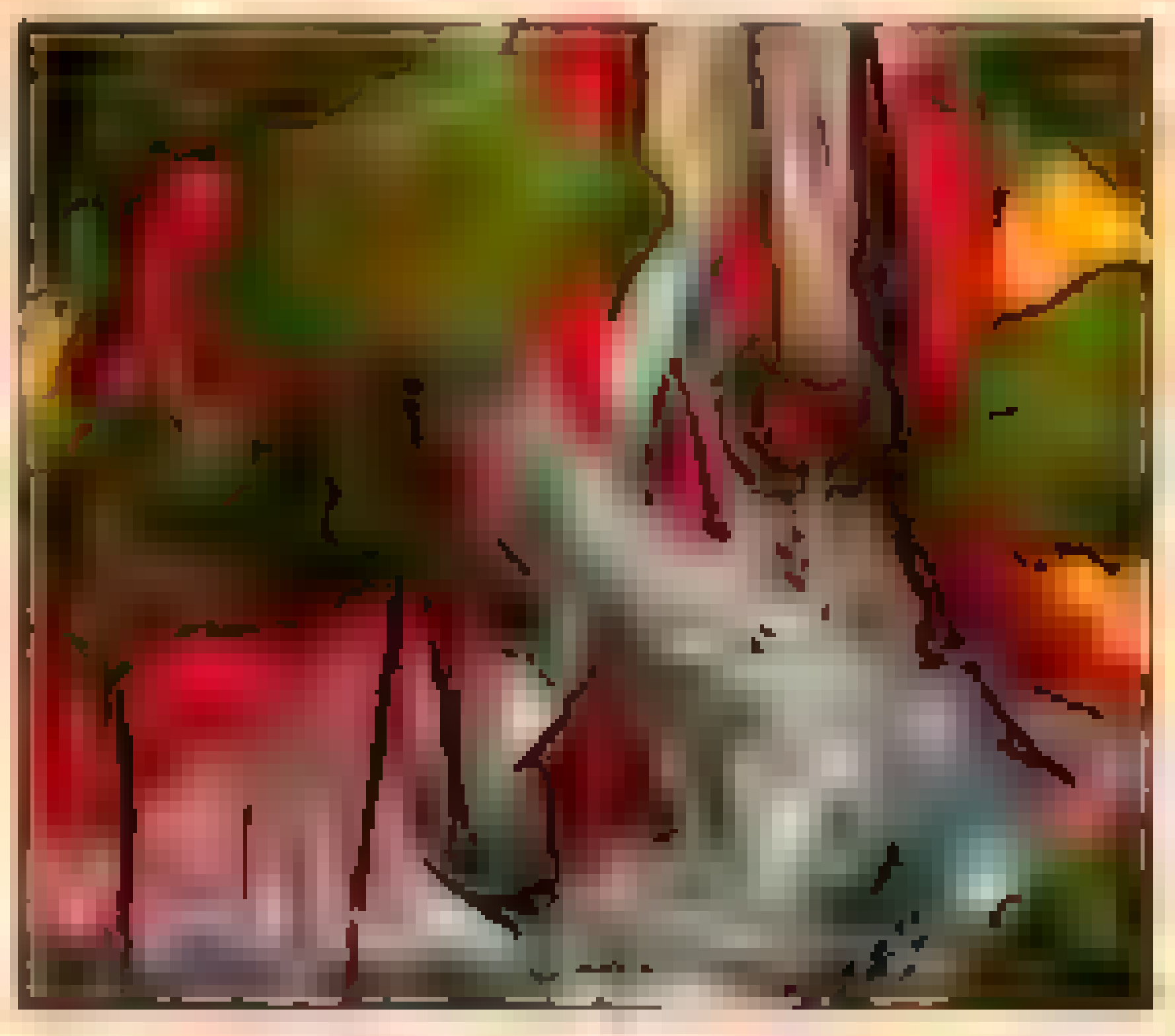
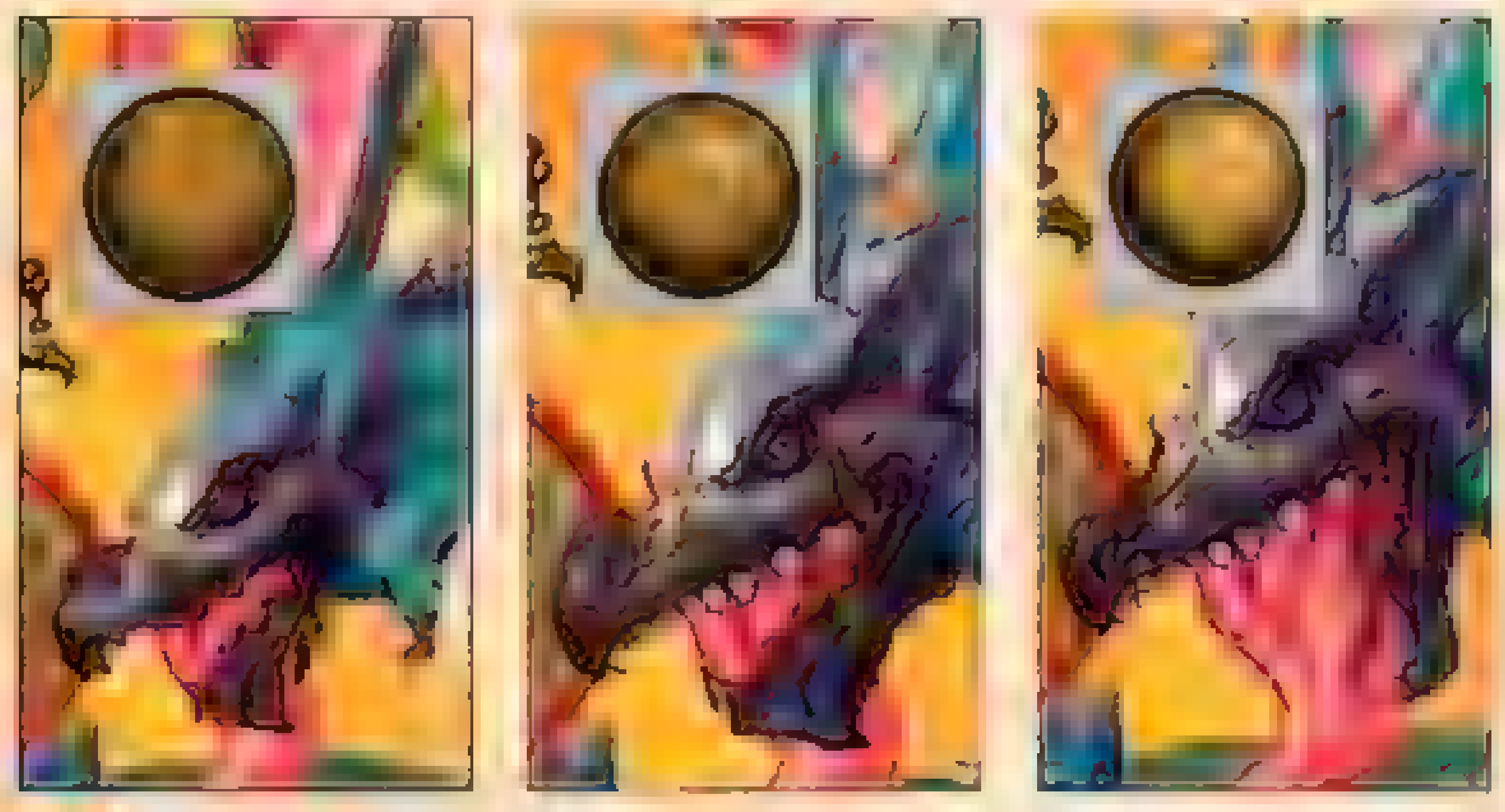
Adding detail

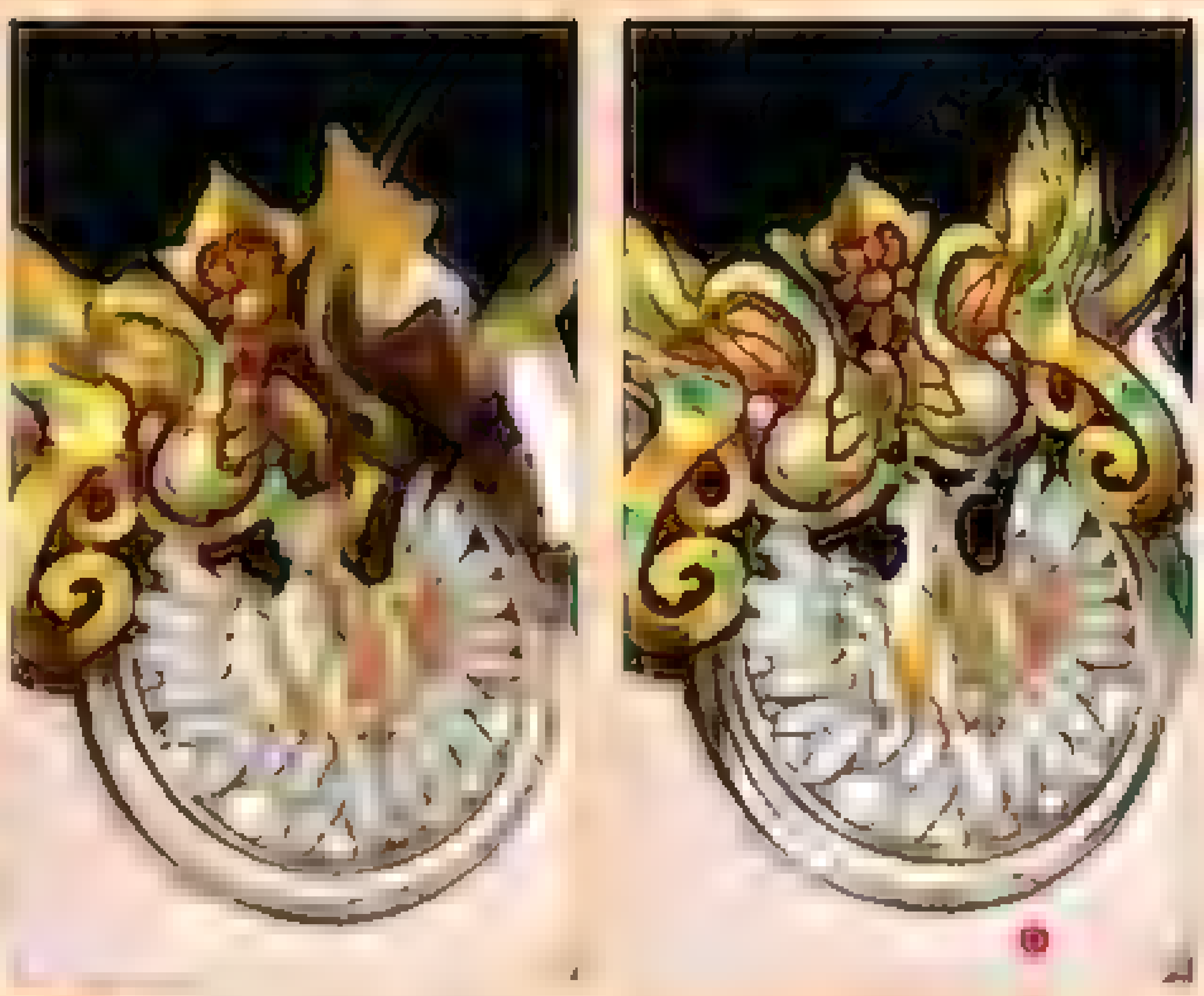
Now I render the spray in more detail. It needs highlights, inflection and complementary colours. Water is like a living thing: it has its own will, which determines where it goes. I sum up how to paint details in three key points: give variation in colour, but blur them in at the background stage; shape every colour and give each a specific area or shape, and finally, draw different lines for the edges of every element (no lines = no detail)





Bringing the dragon to life

I use a Hard Round Pressure Opacity brush to depict every detail of the dragon's head. I usually use the simplest brush for my final touches. I give the nostril, the insides of the mouth and the corner of the eyes special attention. I use an extremely pure colour to make the piece look alive.



Contrasting details

When painting details, a strong sense of contrast is important and that's the biggest difference between photos and painting. Photos are produced with a realistic light source, so the contrast isn't as strong as in a painting. Painting is from your mind and so it has artistic exaggeration, meaning the saturated parts are more saturated and the light parts are lighter. So when I put some lines on the object and give it a specific shape, I still don't want a pure colour, without any dark, shadow or reflective parts

PRO SECRETS

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Traditional

THE MONKEY KING AT MOONLIGHT

The popular character from Chinese mythology is recreated in acrylic by **Jesper Ejsing**, who explains his ideas and technique along the way

I'm a traditional painter who uses acrylics on paper or board. In this workshop I make my own board from paper and cardboard. My palette is a Masterson Sta Wet palette. It's basically a box with a sponge in the bottom and some special paper on top that enables the water from the sponge to soak through. You mix the paint on top of the wet paper and the acrylics which are kept moist from beneath stay wet for weeks. This makes it possible to use the same mixtures and paint for days on end. You can make your own wet-palette from a plastic box and a wet dishcloth with sandwich paper on top. The only thing to bear in mind is that the paper you mix on doesn't dissolve when it's wet.

I use only four brushes: a broad, flat one for large surfaces; a large round one for blocking in colours; a medium size for most of the figure painting, and finally a small one for adding details.

My final piece of equipment is a mirror that's in front of me, on a swing arm. I use it for referencing hands, arms and muscles, and regularly hold my painting in front of it to see it inverted. Mirroring enables me to see it with new eyes, so I can spot composition or anatomy mistakes that my eye has accepted when looking straight at the image.

Artist **PROFILE**

Jesper Ejsing

COUNTRY: Denmark

Jesper is a self-taught fantasy artist who likes to play role-playing and card games, and loves the fact that he's able to illustrate the games he enjoys. He also writes books for young adults.

www.jesperejsing.com

DVD Assets

The files you need are on your DVD in the Jesper Ejsing folder in Workshops.

1 Sketch studies

When I was a child my brother and I watched a Chinese animation of the Monkey King myth and it made a huge impression on us. The hero was cheeky and full of himself not at all like a Disney hero. It was refreshing how he bullied and cheated his way around the other gods and monsters. So I start by trying to capture the essence of that character, going from full blown monster monkey to little circus trick monkey. In the end I find the version that feels right. His facial expression and pose doesn't convey power; instead, he's at ease as if he couldn't care less. I like the clear and readable silhouette of this drawing.

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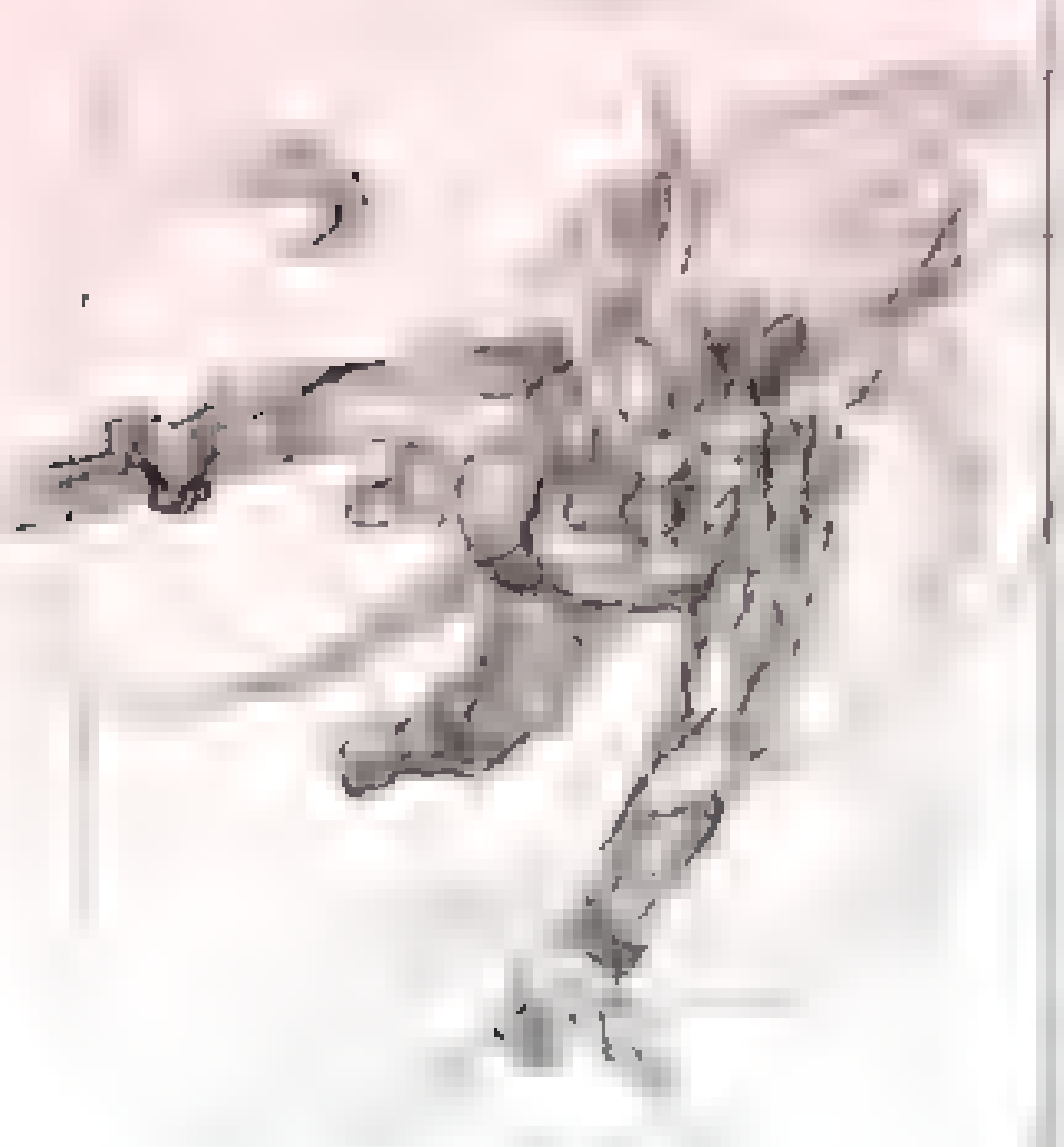
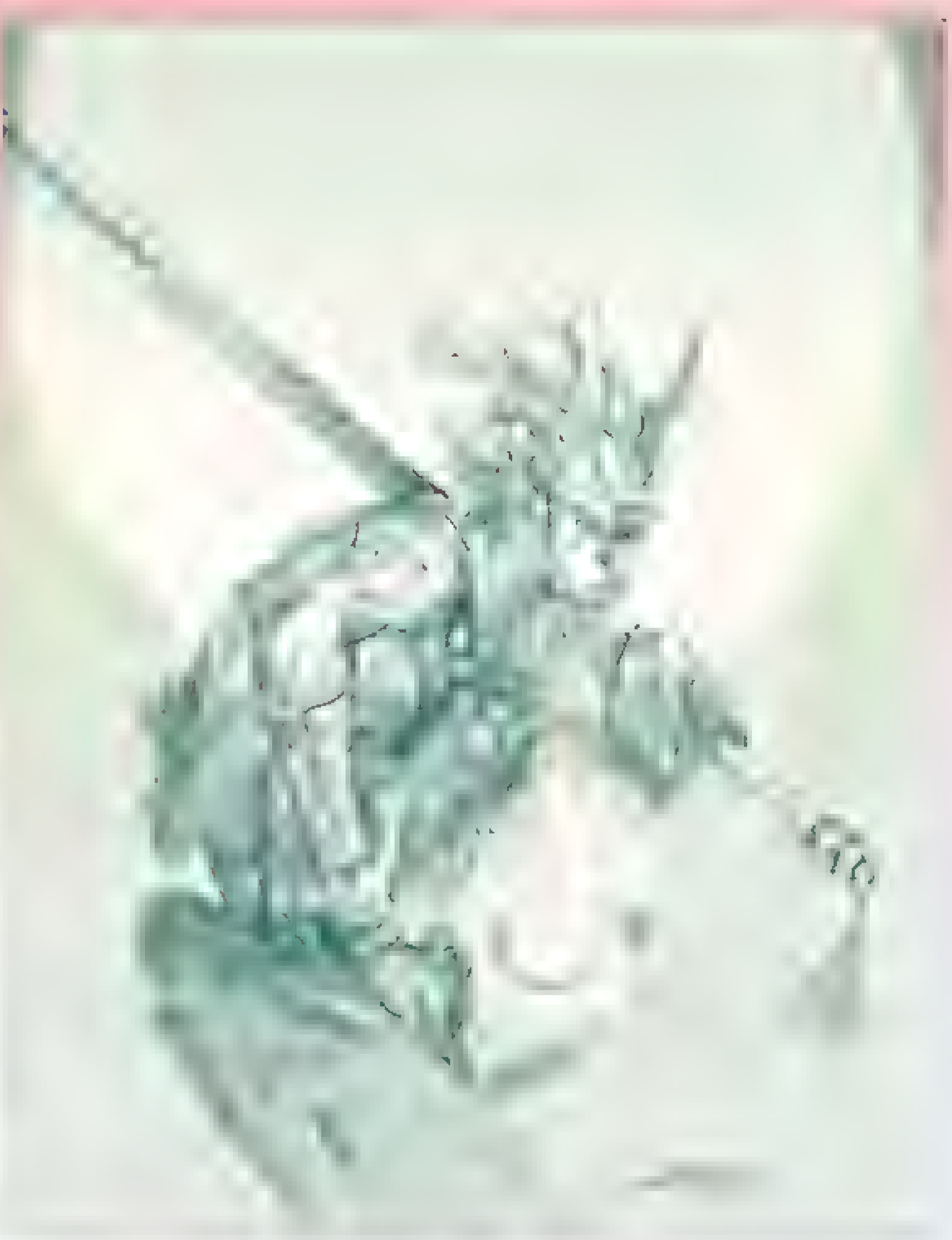
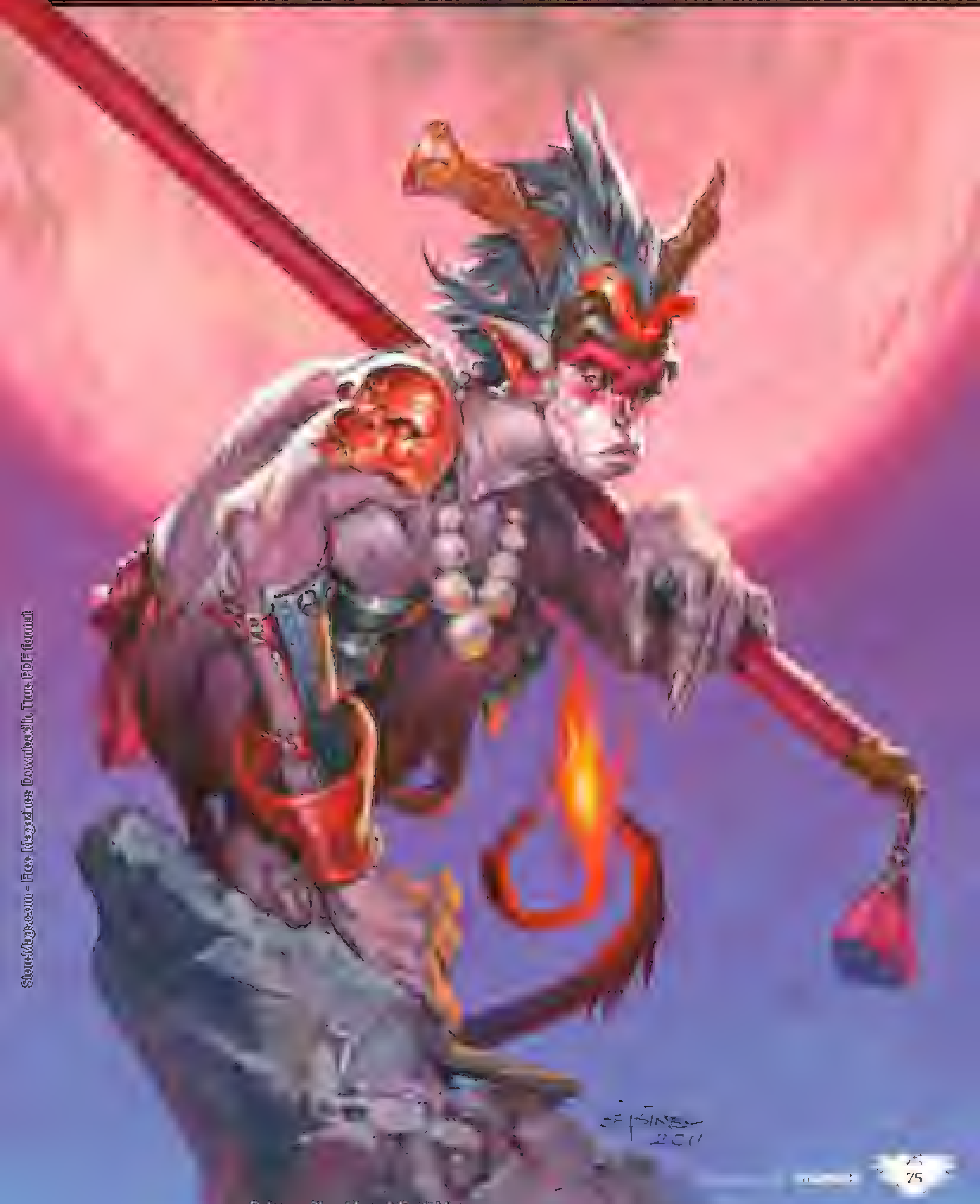
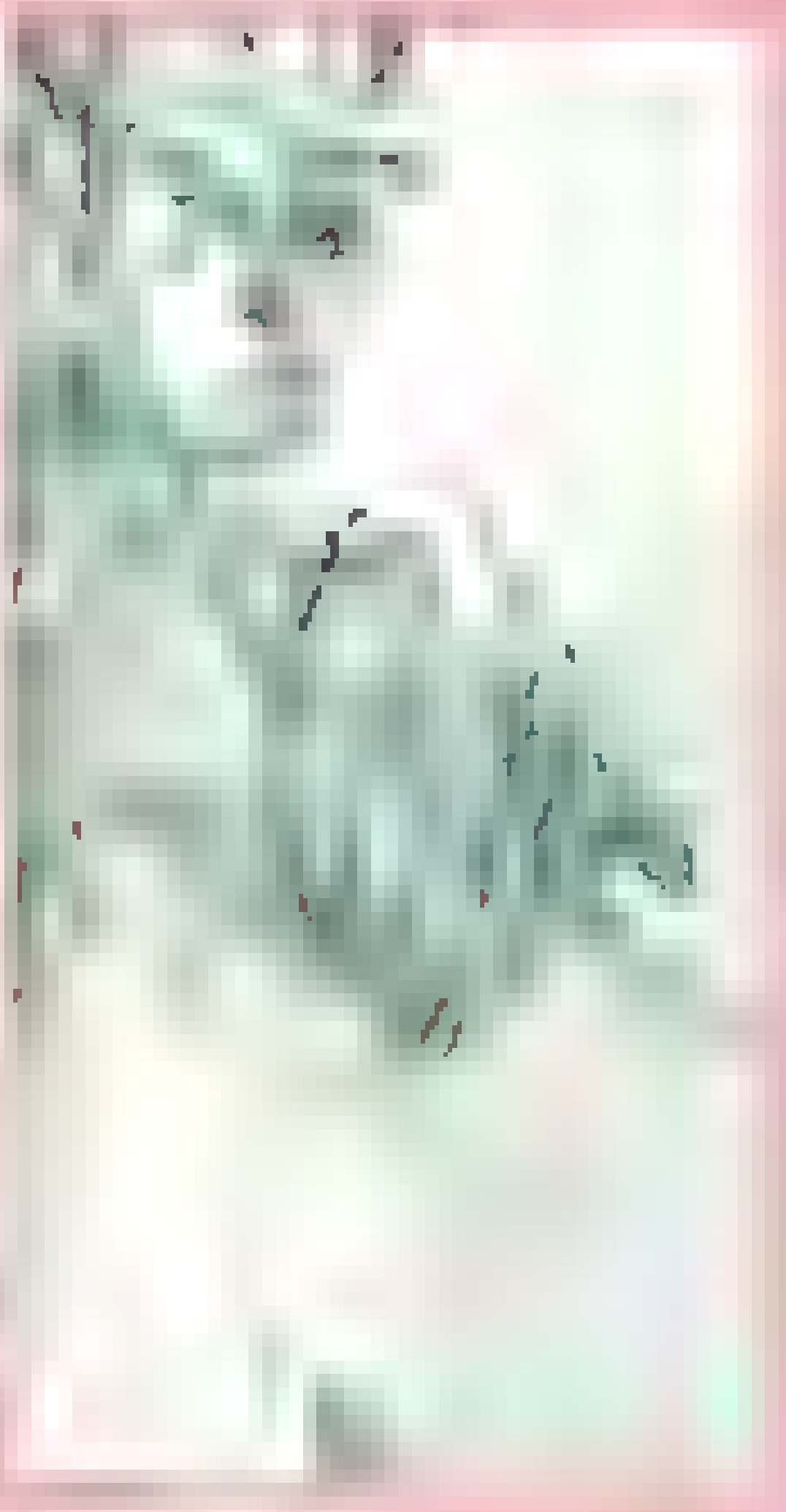






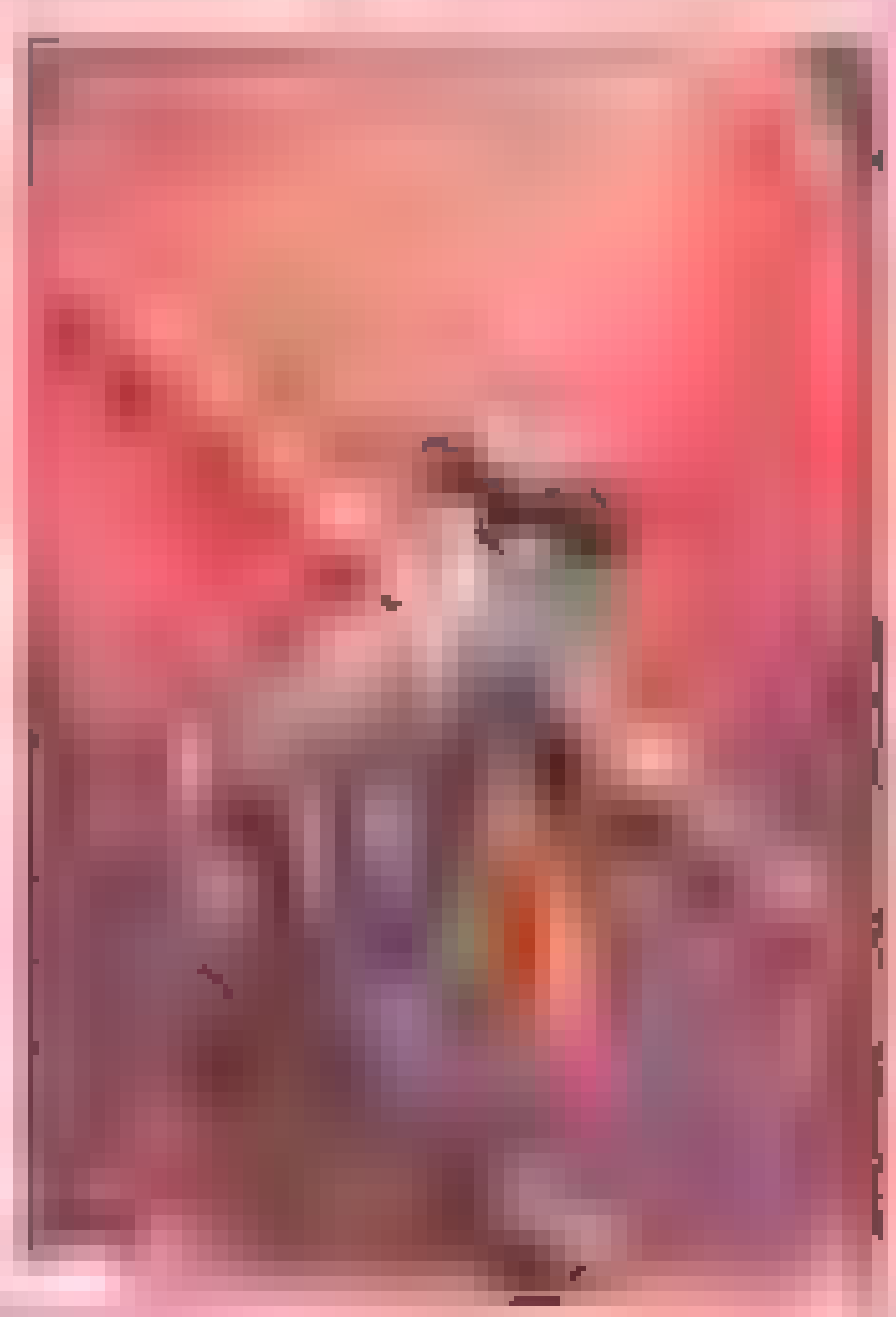
2 Transfer the sketch

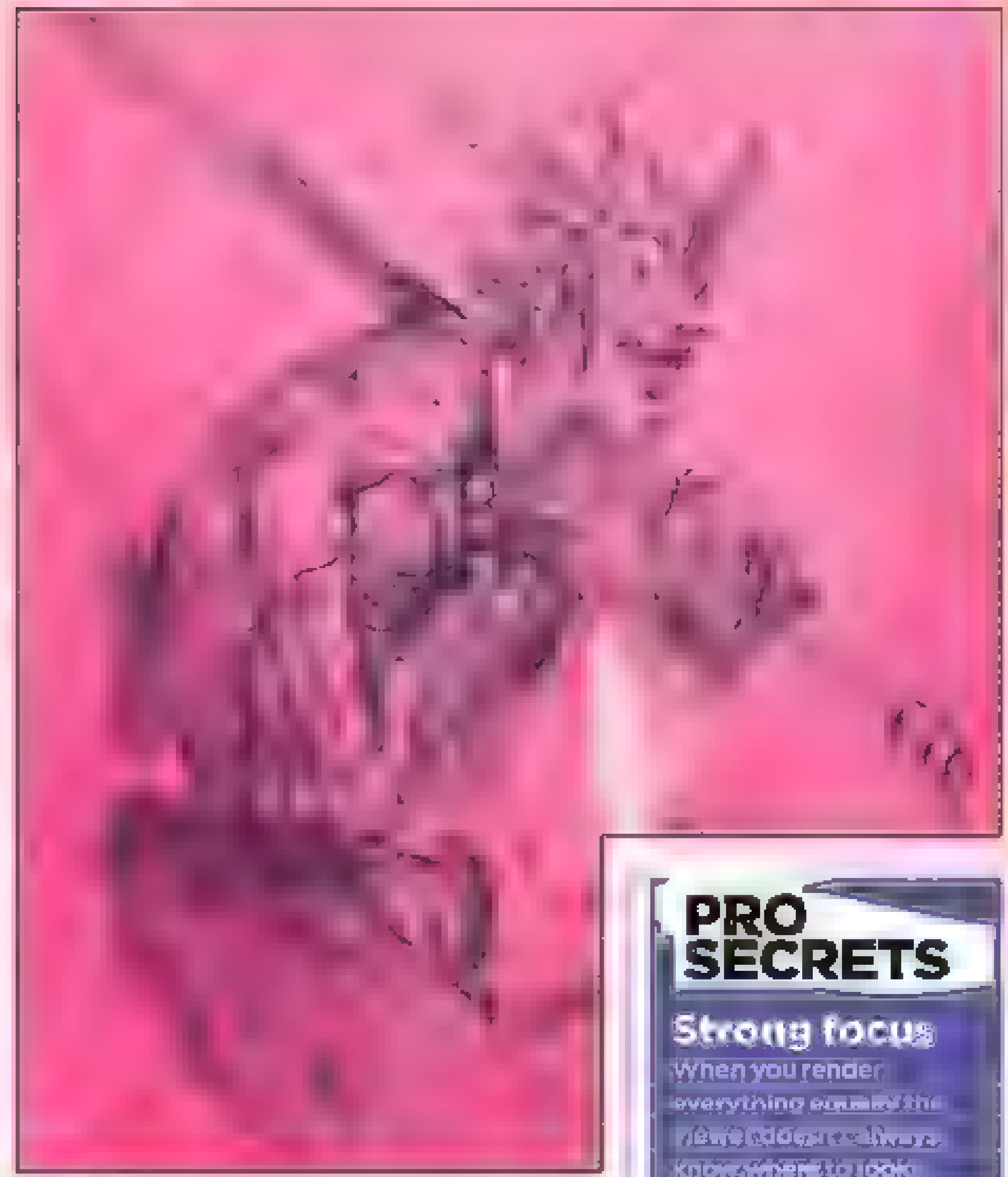
I print the sketch on 300g watercolour paper. The printer, an Epson stylus photo R800, uses acrylic paint. I then glue it to a piece of cardboard with matt medium as the glue. I put the medium on the reverse of the paper so that the front, with the print, is still the raw paper surface. After letting it dry for a couple of hours with a pile of books on top of it I cut away the sides, thus making a clean board with my sketch printed on the front. What I really like about this procedure is that it saves me the tedious job of transferring and redrawing the sketch onto a board



3 Colour rough

I've already decided on the flaming tail and now need a cool colour for contrast. Purple it is. The circular moon is a nice graphic element that makes the monkey silhouette stand out better. I keep the moon in a cool pink colour, making the flame the warmest part of the painting. I always try to think in terms of either warm or cool colours, rather than the exact colour. The temperature difference creates more depth and volume





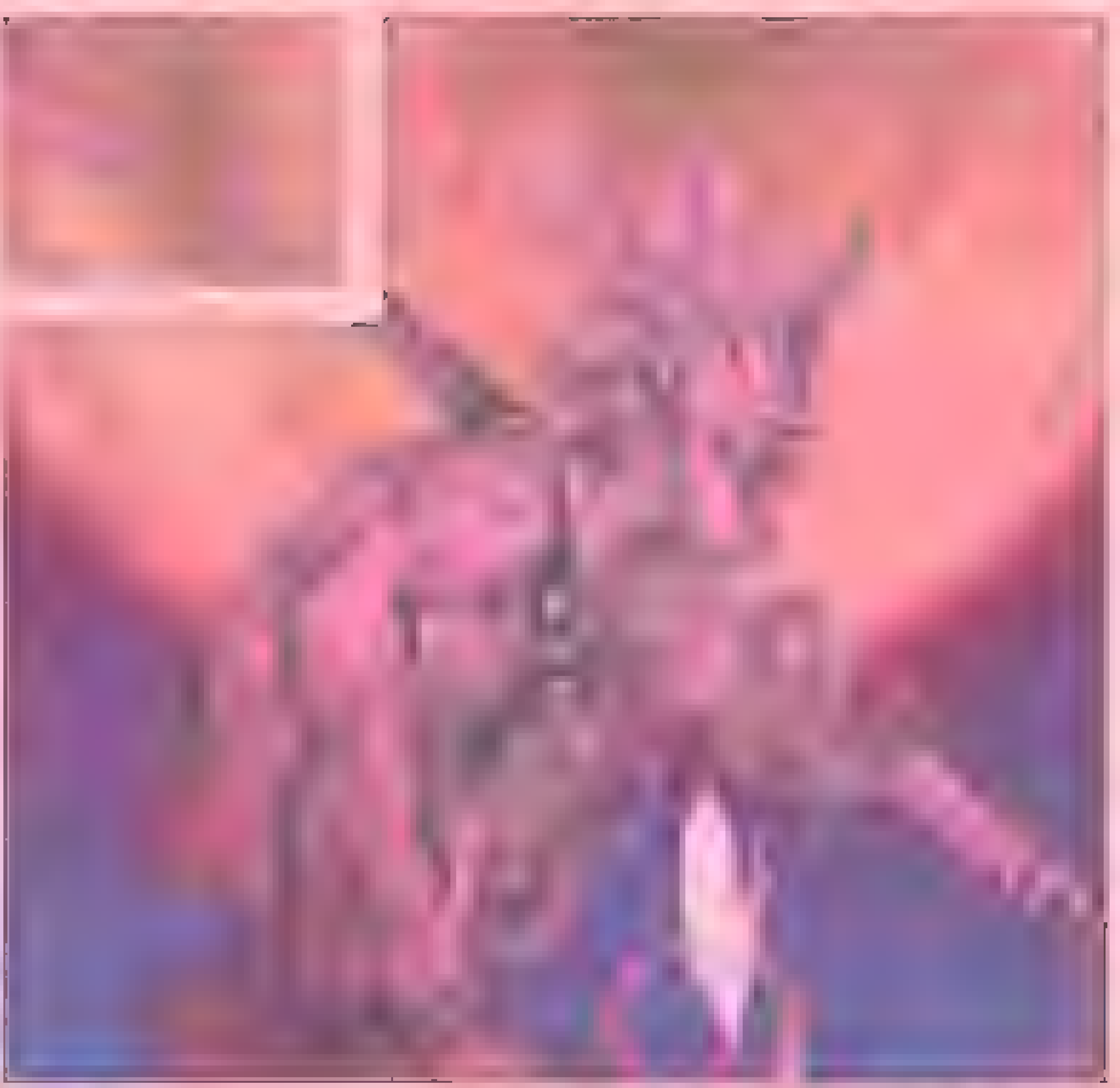
4 First wash

Because the whole painting is going to be mostly purple I choose a pink for the underpainting stage. I normally use Raw Umber for warm scenes and Cobalt Blue for cool scenes, but for this image I want a more intense look. I'm hoping that the pink will shine through in selected areas. The aim of the wash is to tone all the lines and dark spots. It also gives me a base to work on

PRO SECRETS

Strong focus

When you render everything equally the viewer doesn't always know where to look. Always choose one focal point and make that point have the compositional focus, the highest contrast and the brightest colour. The farther you go from the focal point, the less those areas should draw the eye. As an example I didn't use the rim light on the rocks, because it would draw attention away from the figure

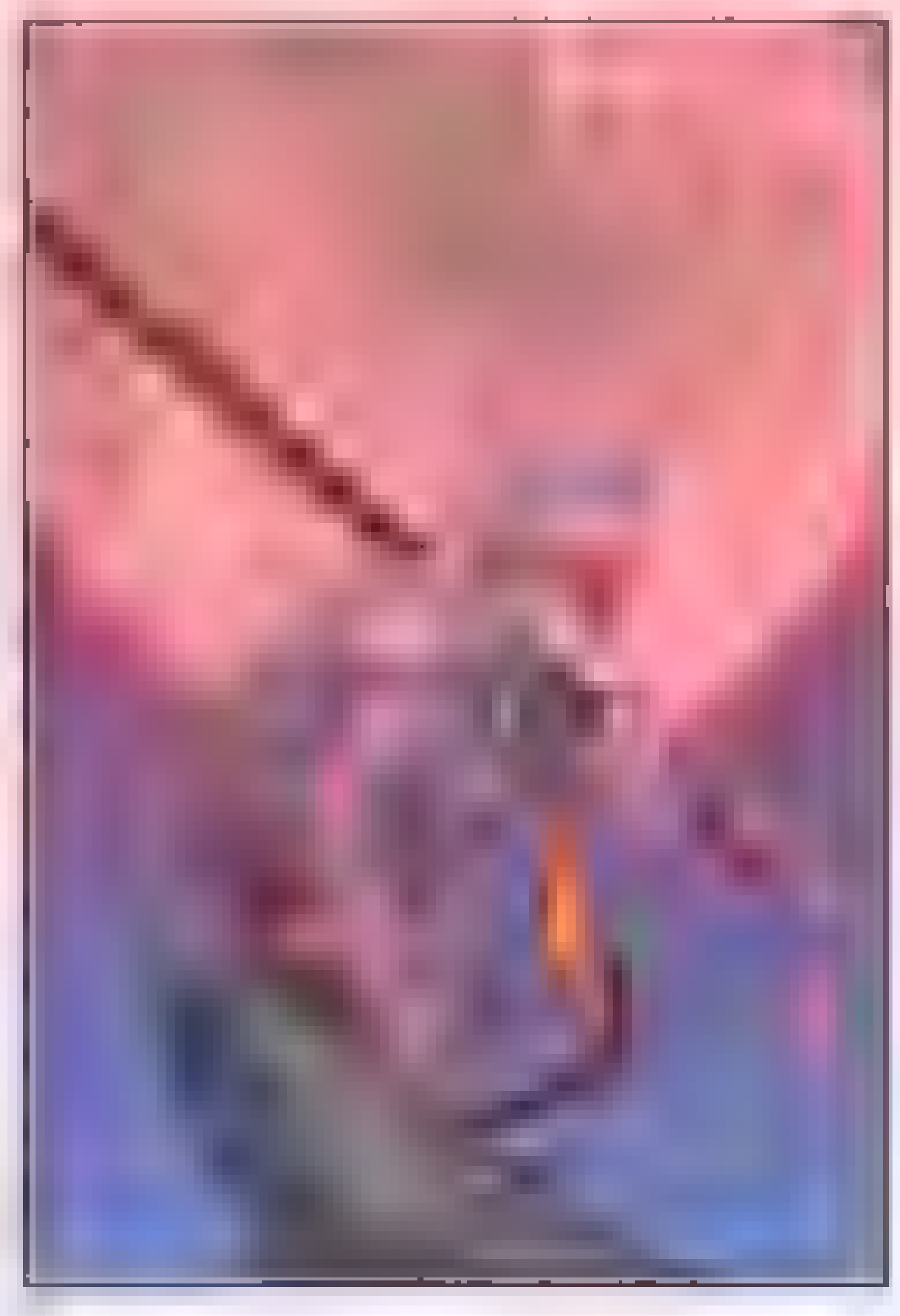


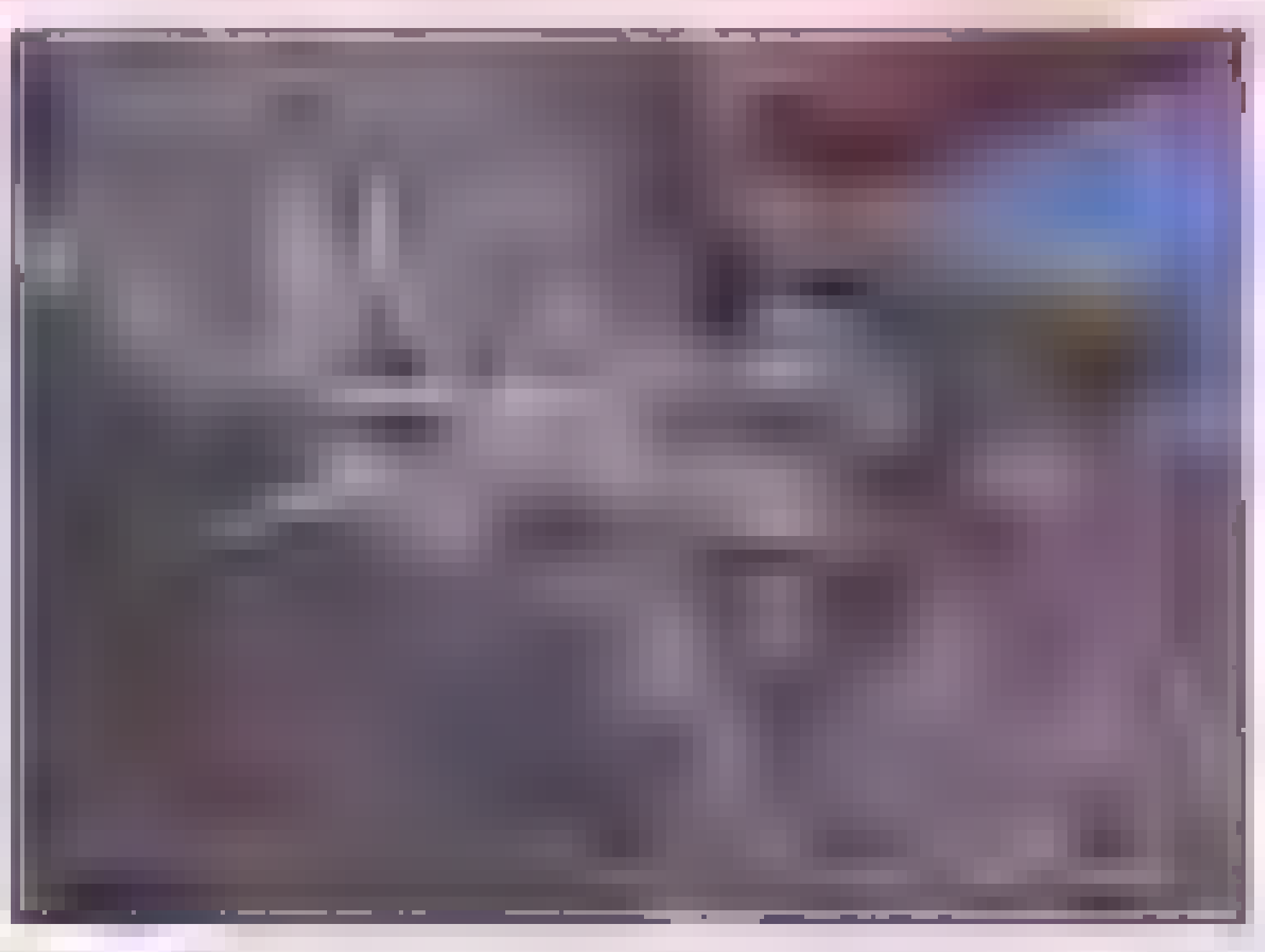
5 Painting the background

I always start with the background elements. I let the strokes overlap the outline of the figure slightly. This means that I avoid the strokes bending and turning around the figure. At the figure stage I'll create a sense of depth by painting over the strokes from the background, so that it looks like the brushstrokes from the background continue behind the figure. I do the moon first, very loosely and lightly with the big flat brush. For the sharp strokes I use it sideways with the edge. As soon as I've captured some texture resembling the structure of the moon I cut the shape out with a blue colour creating the circle. I add the pink aura for a glow effect to soften the contrast

6 Background amendments

When looking at the very purple-ish background, I decide that it's too purple and too flat, and needs more variation. So I work from the bottom and up with a Light Blue Magenta, making the background slightly lighter than my colour rough



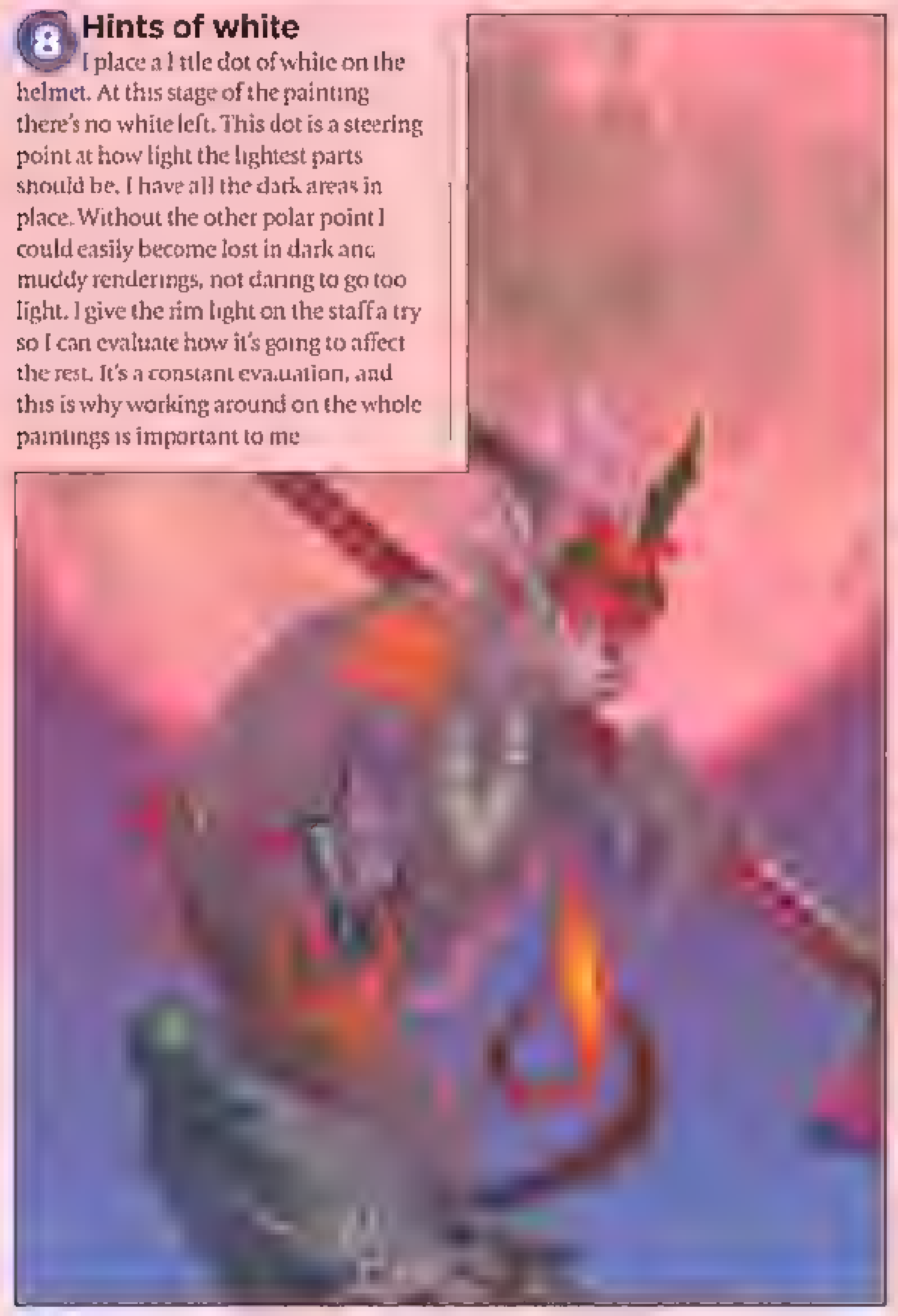


7 Blocking in

I add the orange and yellow to the tail, because the flame is an important element. Then I put the red on the face. This is the focal point of the image. I decide on a neutral, greyish base for the skin tone and then go on to the rocks. I simply dot away with a large flat brush going this way and that, creating smudges and square strokes. As soon as I spot chunks in the paint that could be shaped into a rock I add a shadow side and a light side. I relax my focus and dot the area roughly, looking for usable patterns and enhancing them. I let some pink of the underpaint show through, and use a purple/pink in the shadow part of the rocks instead of a black. I like to replace black shadows with colour to prevent the image from becoming too dark

8 Hints of white

I place a little dot of white on the helmet. At this stage of the painting there's no white left. This dot is a steering point at how light the lightest parts should be. I have all the dark areas in place. Without the other polar point I could easily become lost in dark and muddy renderings, not daring to go too light. I give the rim light on the staff a try so I can evaluate how it's going to affect the rest. It's a constant evaluation, and this is why working around on the whole paintings is important to me.

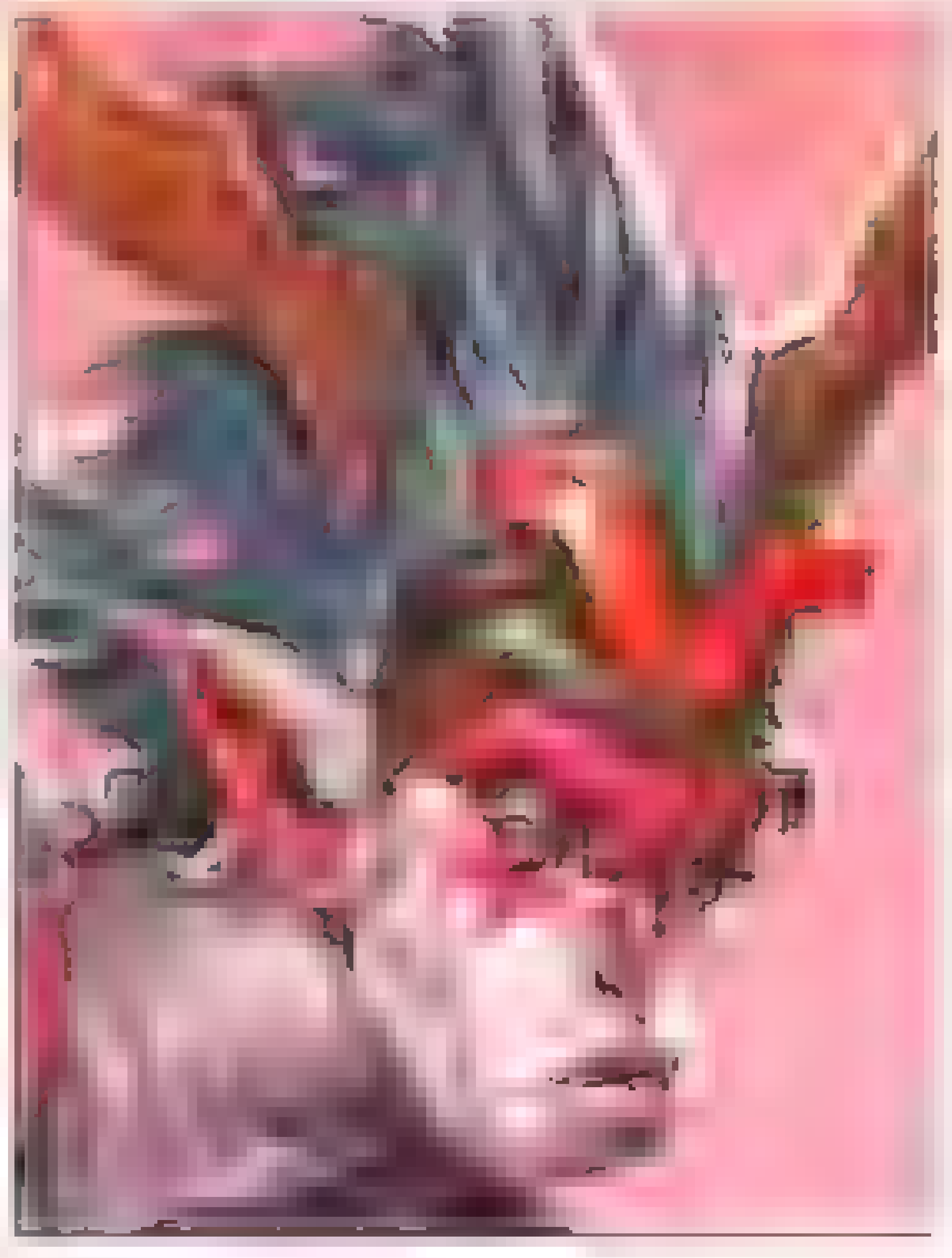


9 Blocking in all the character elements

Now I add the colour to all of the elements: the bracelets, horns, shoulder pad and tassel. For the necklace I use a light colour to pull it out from the dark, and try a pink for the light on the red staff. I notice that the arm guard isn't working and needs to be painted over. The background and the rocks are finished, the rest is covered with paint and the end of the painting process is slowly coming into sight. All I need to do is render the details and add light.

10 Tackling the face

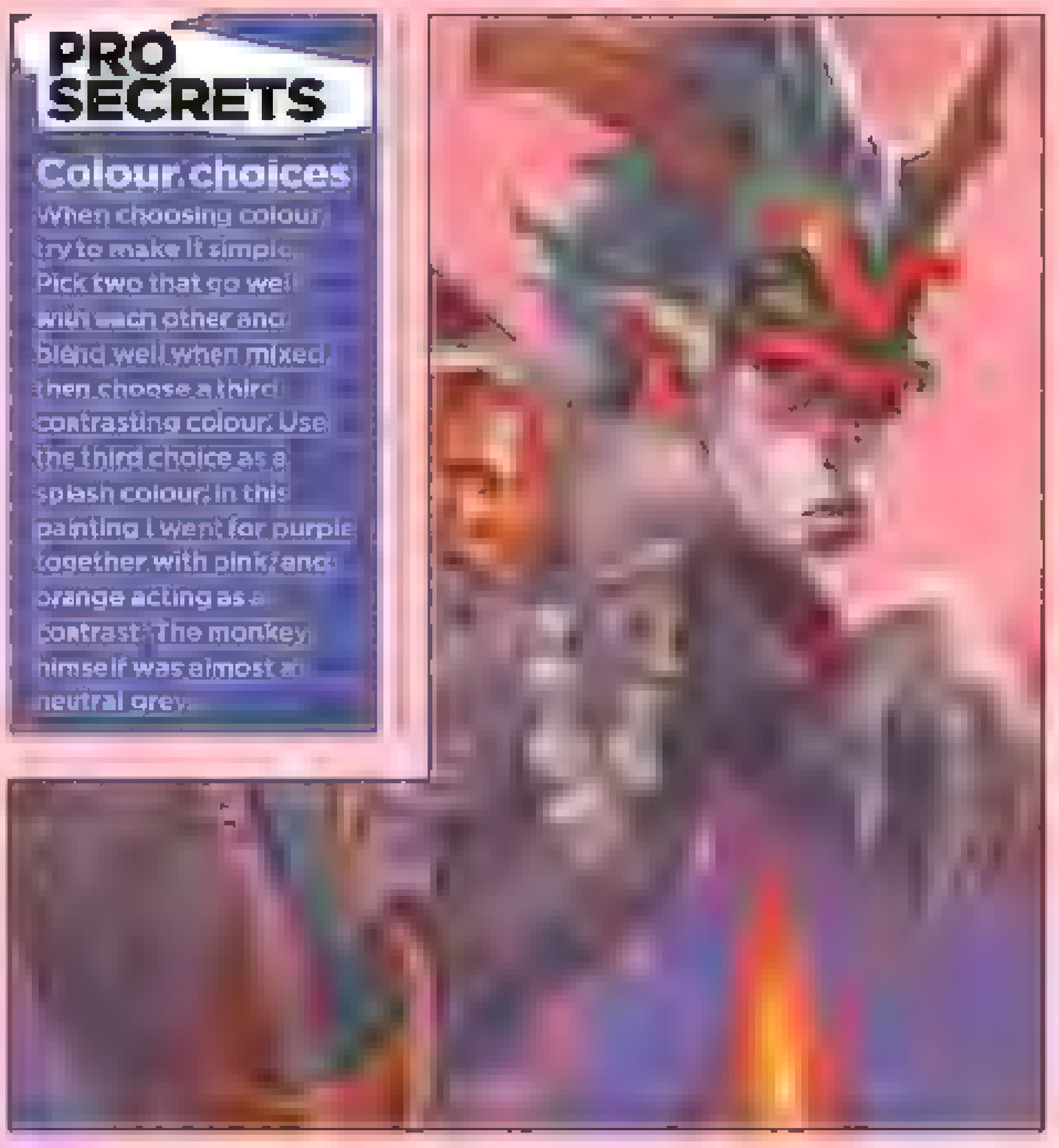
Now I go straight to the face – the most important thing of a figure painting. If I can make the face work, I know the rest will fall into place. I dot small specks of light grey with a twist of pink to the face and neck, building up the facial structure. In the red part of the face I use pink for light. I try to use only cool colours in the main part of the face that's in shadow. The rim light on the other hand is toned with yellow to make it warm. This temperature contrast will boost the three-dimensional effect. The yellowish light from the moon is painted in on top of his back and his right arm, shaping the elbow and enhancing the foreshortening.



PRO SECRETS

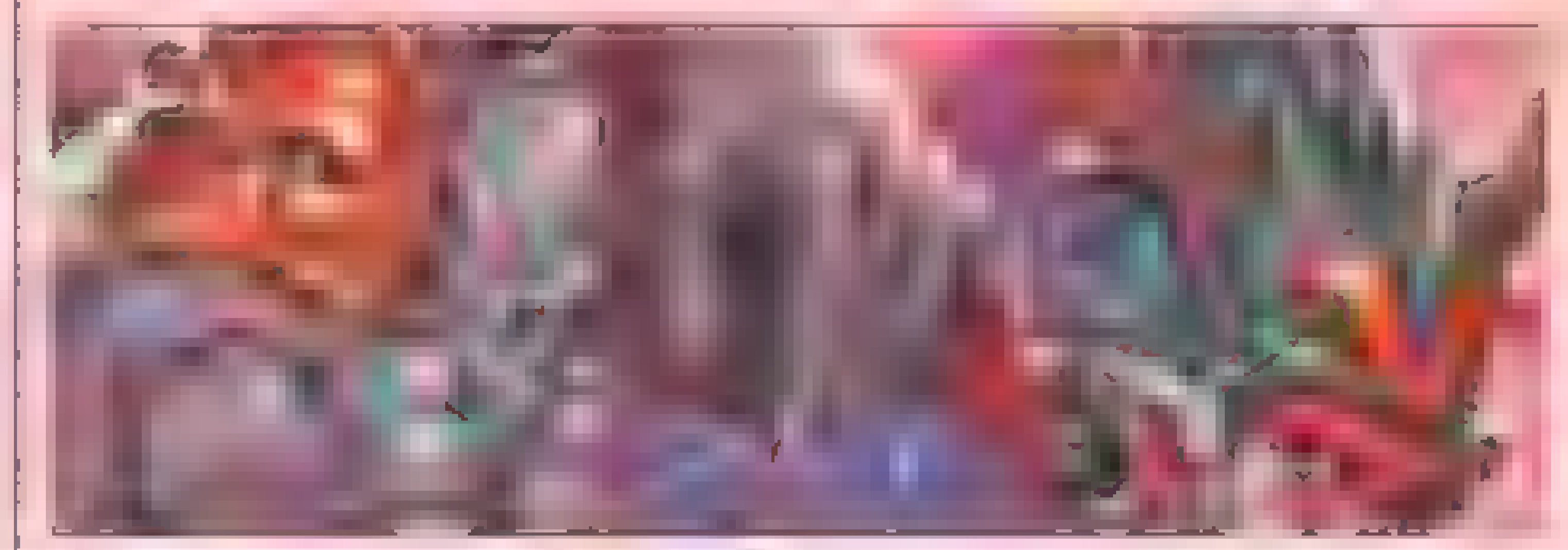
Colour choices

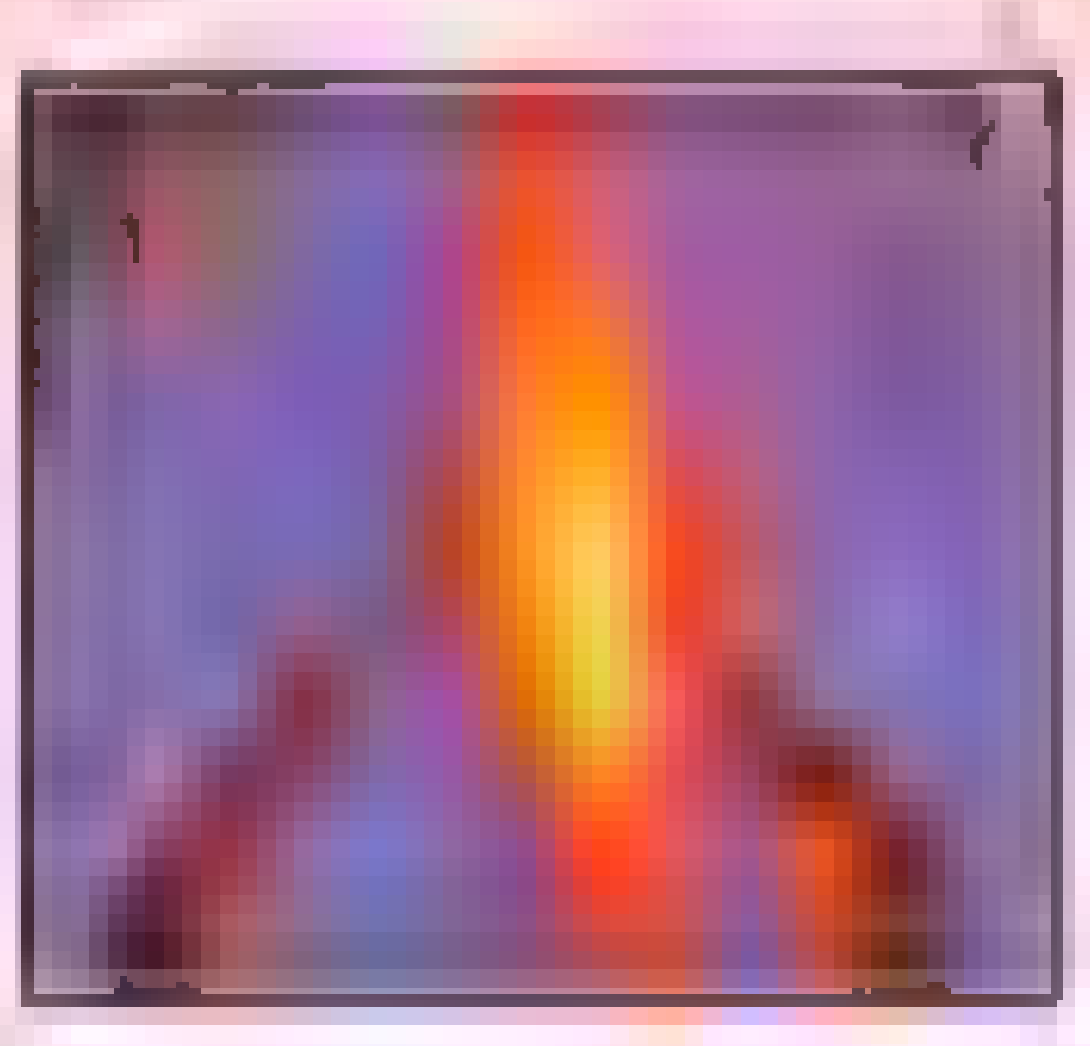
When choosing colours try to make it simple. Pick two that go well with each other and blend well when mixed, then choose a third contrasting colour. Use the third choice as a splash colour; in this painting I went for purple together with pink, and orange acting as a contrast. The monkey himself was almost a neutral grey.

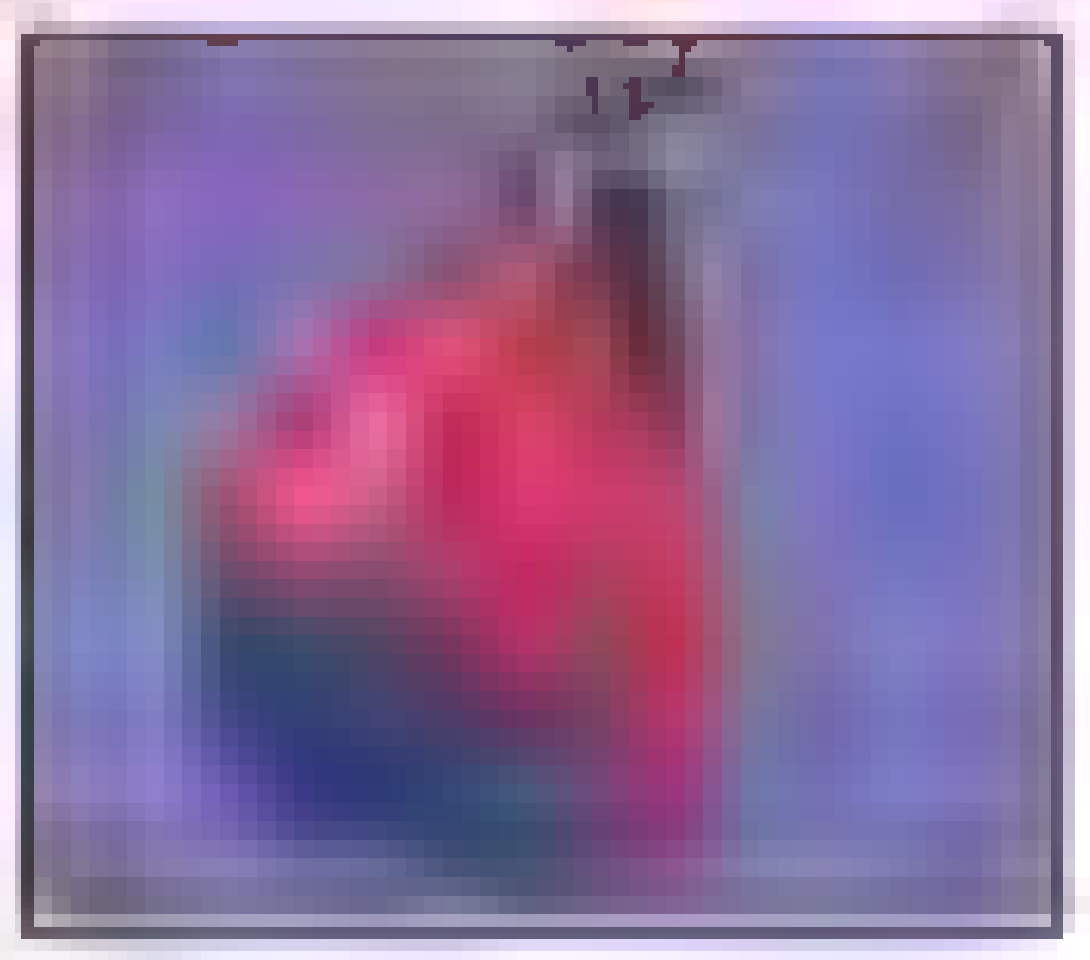


11 Rendering details

I go back and forth from the rim light to the shadow areas. I try to give the shoulder pad more contrast than the fur and skin. Metal reflects light and fur would soak it up, softening the light reflections. I focus on shaping the pearls of the necklace and try to capture the different lights bouncing off them with simple strokes. I add light to the horns the same way as I did with the rocks, by letting the hand do the work with me picking up the shapes.







12 Sharpening up

I use the small brush with thick dark paint. After dipping it in the paint I draw a line quite hard on a piece of paper. It makes the brush sharp on one side and broad on another, because the thick paint holds the shape. I then use the sharp edge to outline and refine edges within the painting, on areas where two things connect. It's a matter of defining edges and shadows: the armpit and knee cap; the shoulder plate on the shoulder; the ear down to the neck. I go over all of the painting and resharpen the areas that, during the blocking in and detailing, has become diffused or overpainted.

13 Acting on feedback

When I think it's finished, I ask my colleagues for their opinions. One comment is that the monkey's legs and feet seems too light compared to the tail and the rest, so I darken the area behind the arm and underneath the necklace. I also glaze the area over with a reddish brown to make it match the flame, and take a magenta and glaze over the bracelet and the shoulder plate to match the cool of the skin tone. Looking back now, I wish I had done the same thing with the horns and brow. But I'm never satisfied and I don't think you ever should be!

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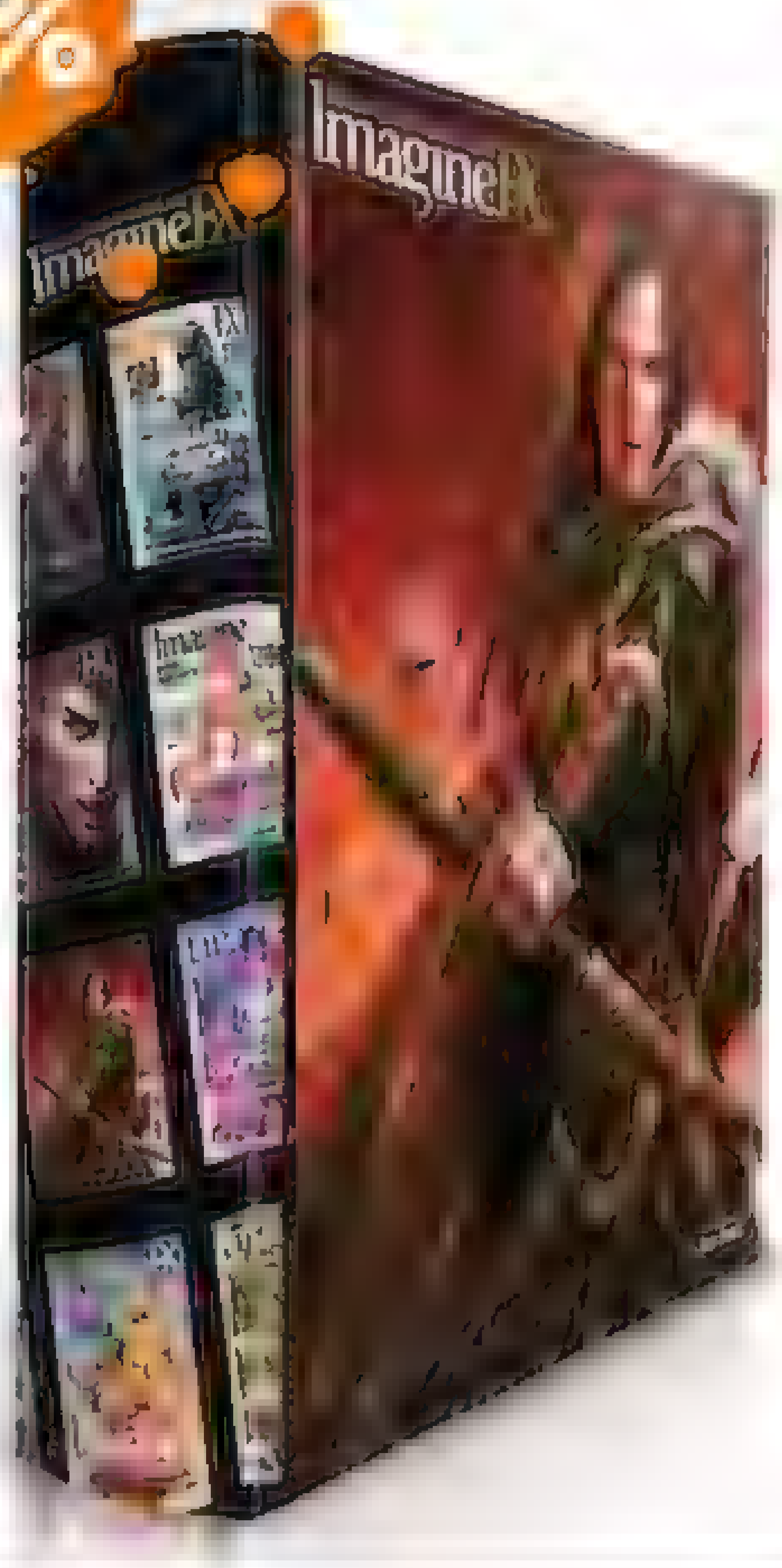

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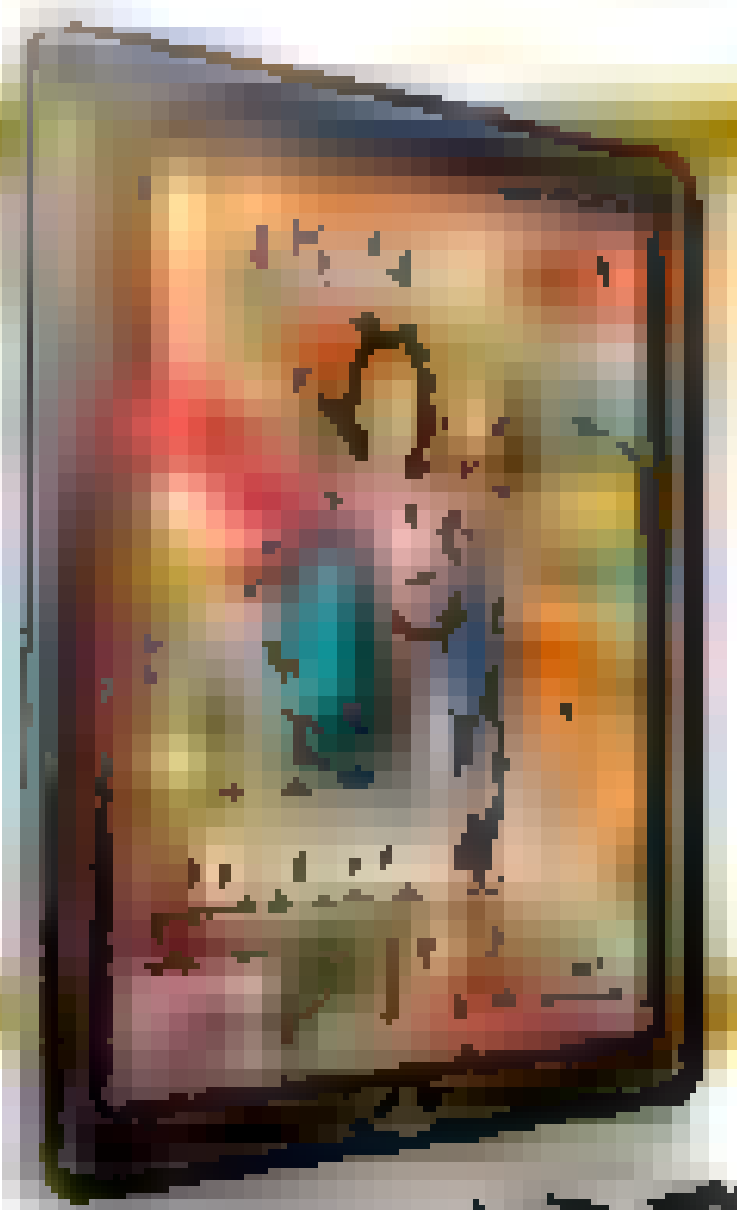


Paint Tool SAI

COMPOSE YOUR MANGA CHARACTERS

Hiro Usuda demonstrates how to draw an enchanting small crowd scene in the manga style, using Paint Tool SAI with a little help from Poser

Artist PROFILE

Hiro Usuda

COUNTRY: Japan

Former Konami [illegible]

[illegible]

http://bit.ly/efwNb

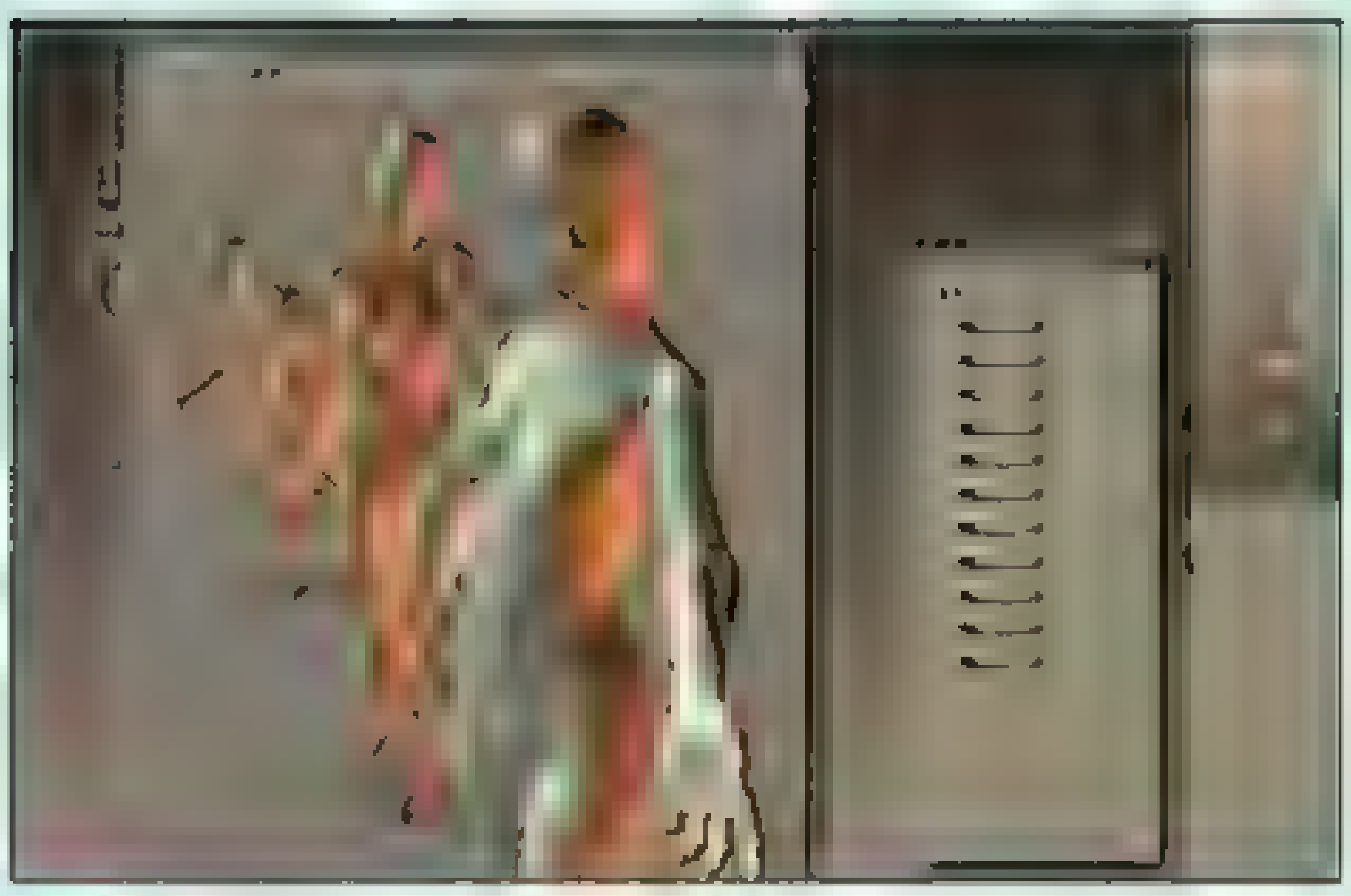
DVD Assets

[illegible]

I'm going to explain how I compose a group of manga characters. When I draw pictures in the manga style, I always take care over a character's features. A Japanese audience will appreciate the attractiveness of any character. Furthermore, when painting a person's face you'll need to quickly convey their personality or unique skills.

My usual strategy is for female characters to have slightly oversized eyes and a small nose. In contrast, I draw a male character as realistically as I can. The background is drawn realistically too, although I use exaggerated perspective to give the painting extra impact. Because it's a manga scene it's not necessary to use a realistic colour palette, which might prove restrictive. This is fine by me because colouring is one of the best parts of the process.

After churning out many thumbnails, I decided to make it a bright, interesting environment featuring just three figures.

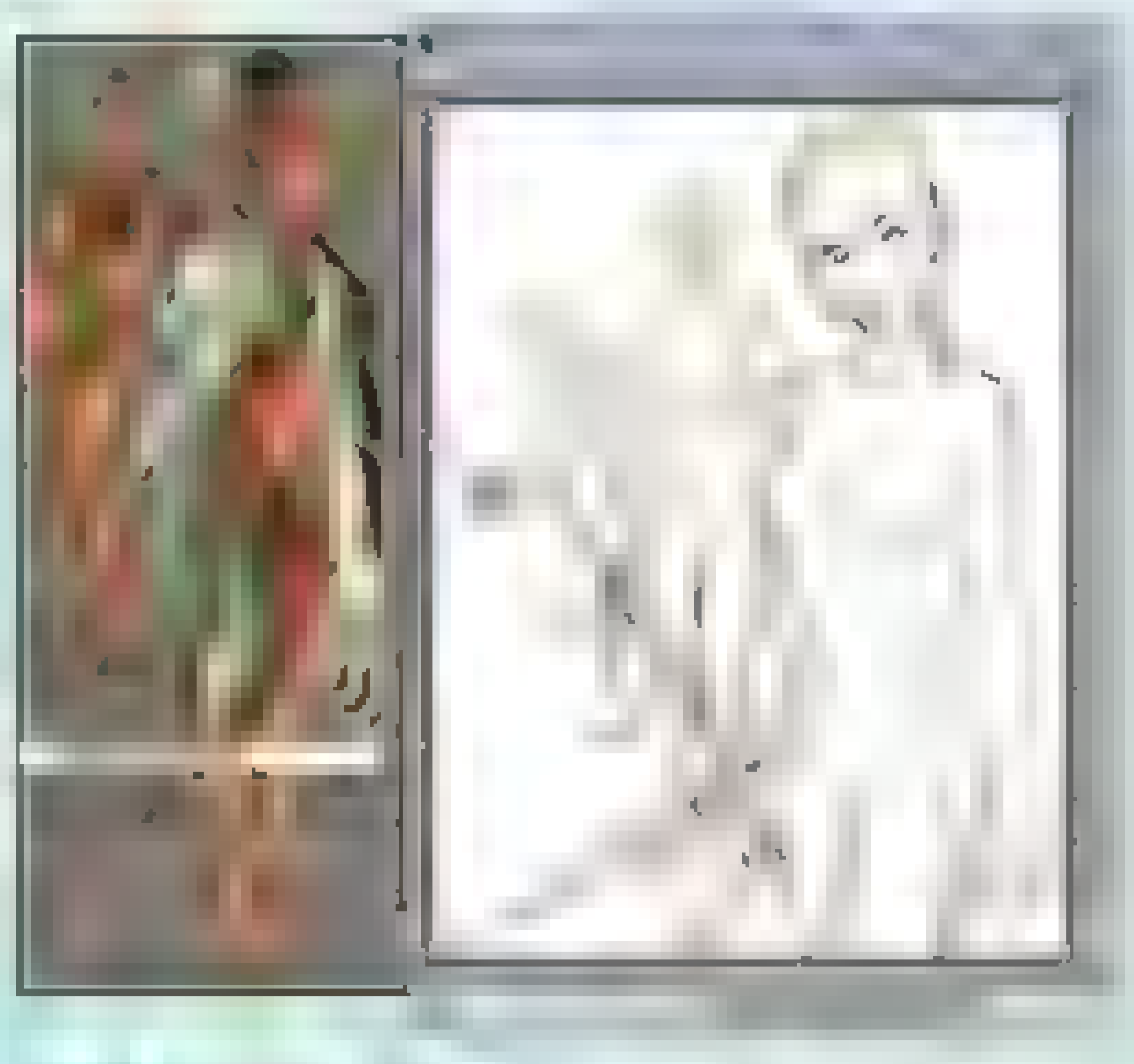


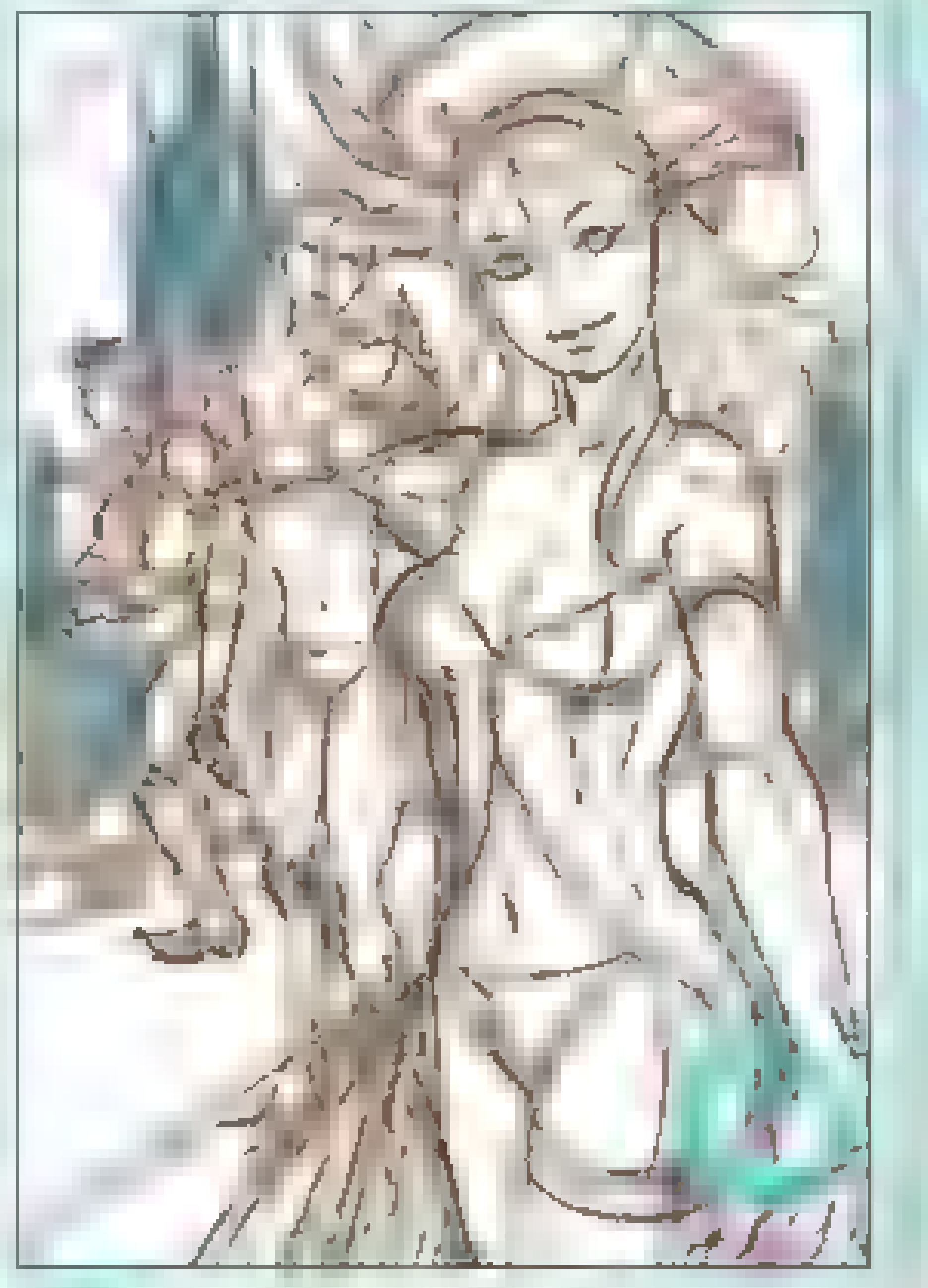
1 Simple sketch

First, blocking. Based on the quite rough composition with simple circles and lines, I make character poses. In Poser 6 3D software you can make sample figure poses in three-dimensional graphic space and can render images through the viewport with your customised camera and lighting configurations. I used to draw figures without any references, but I find that the more specific the reference I use, the more believable description I come up with.

2 Rough composition

In Poser 6, I lay out the sample figure for the main female character in front of the camera. I think about there being a wand in her right hand and the light effect of her magic in her left. I make her eyes aim towards the camera and set the other two characters, following the rough composition. I render the image in Preview Mode without textures, to be able to see the clear gradations. Now I'm ready to start drawing.



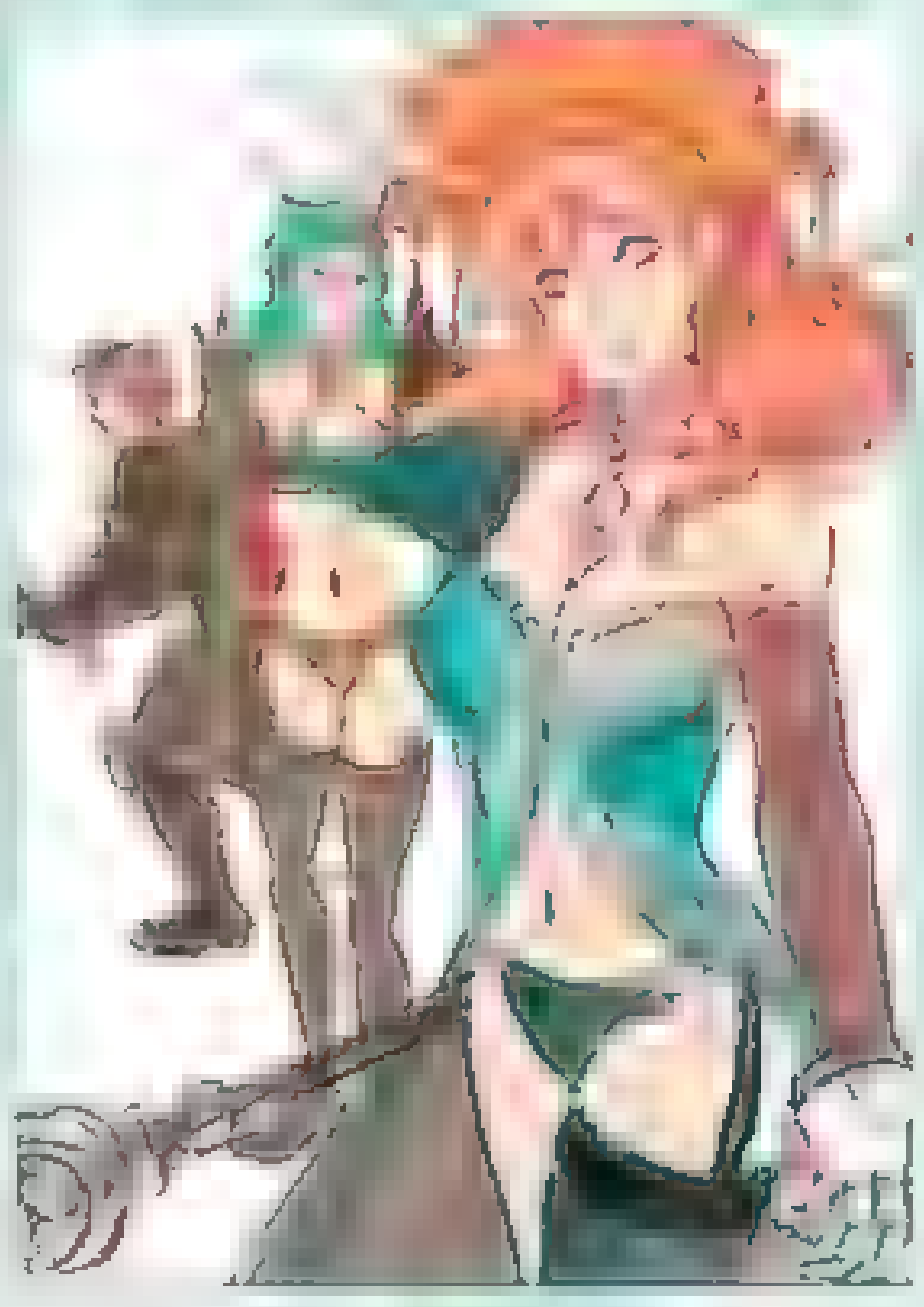


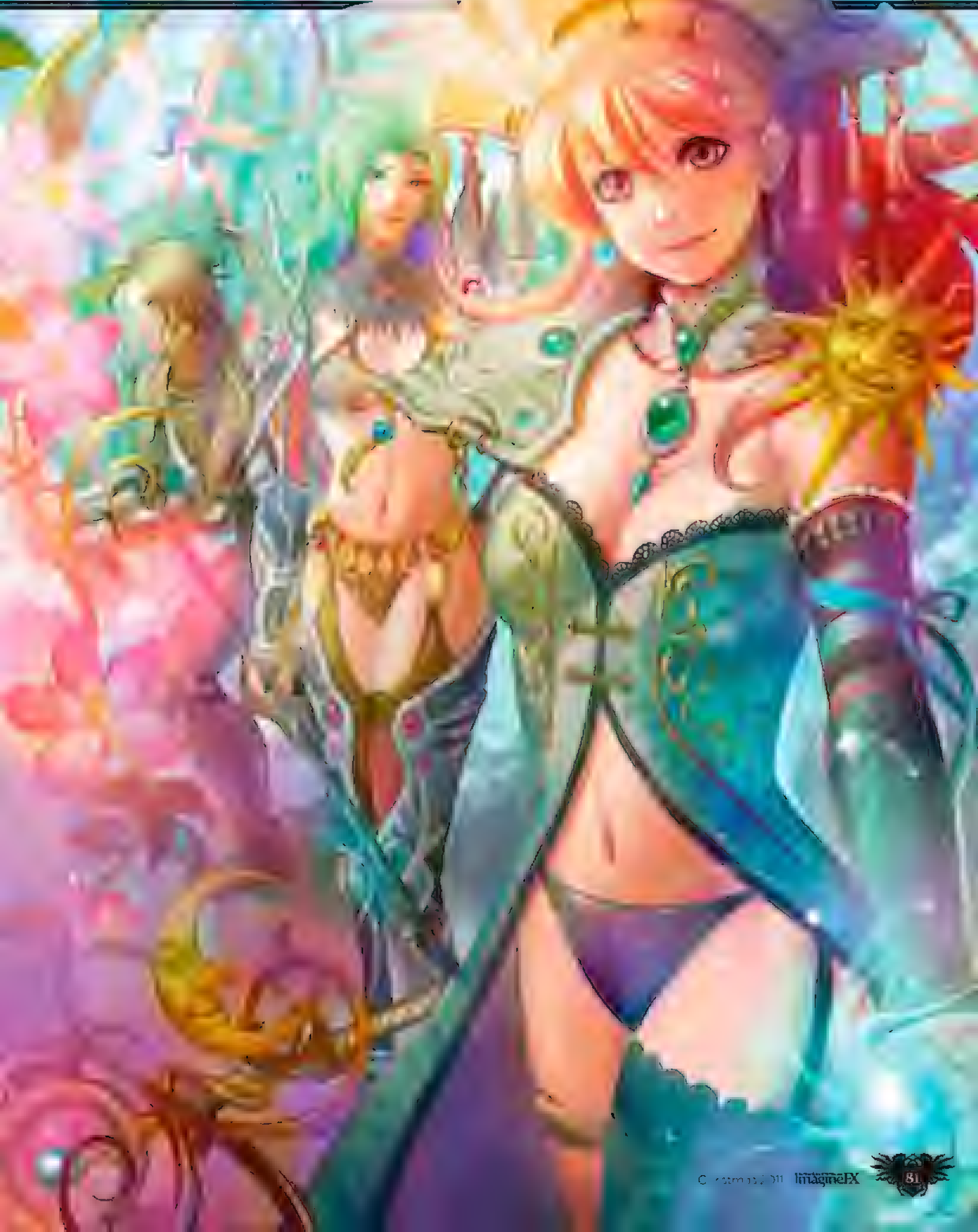
3 Decide on colour tones

Moving on to SAI, the digital painting software, I start with thin lines using the Airbrush Tool. After creating layers for each character, which will make editing easier later, I draw nude figures first, then decide on the costumes. When the draft image is done, I set it to the Template layer and lower the Opacity value. Then I make a new layer, to draw clear and specific lines over the template. Blocking is also good for adding colour. I lay down rough colours on another new layer over the finished outlines of the main character and over the Line layer too, in order to check the overall tones.

4 Add colour

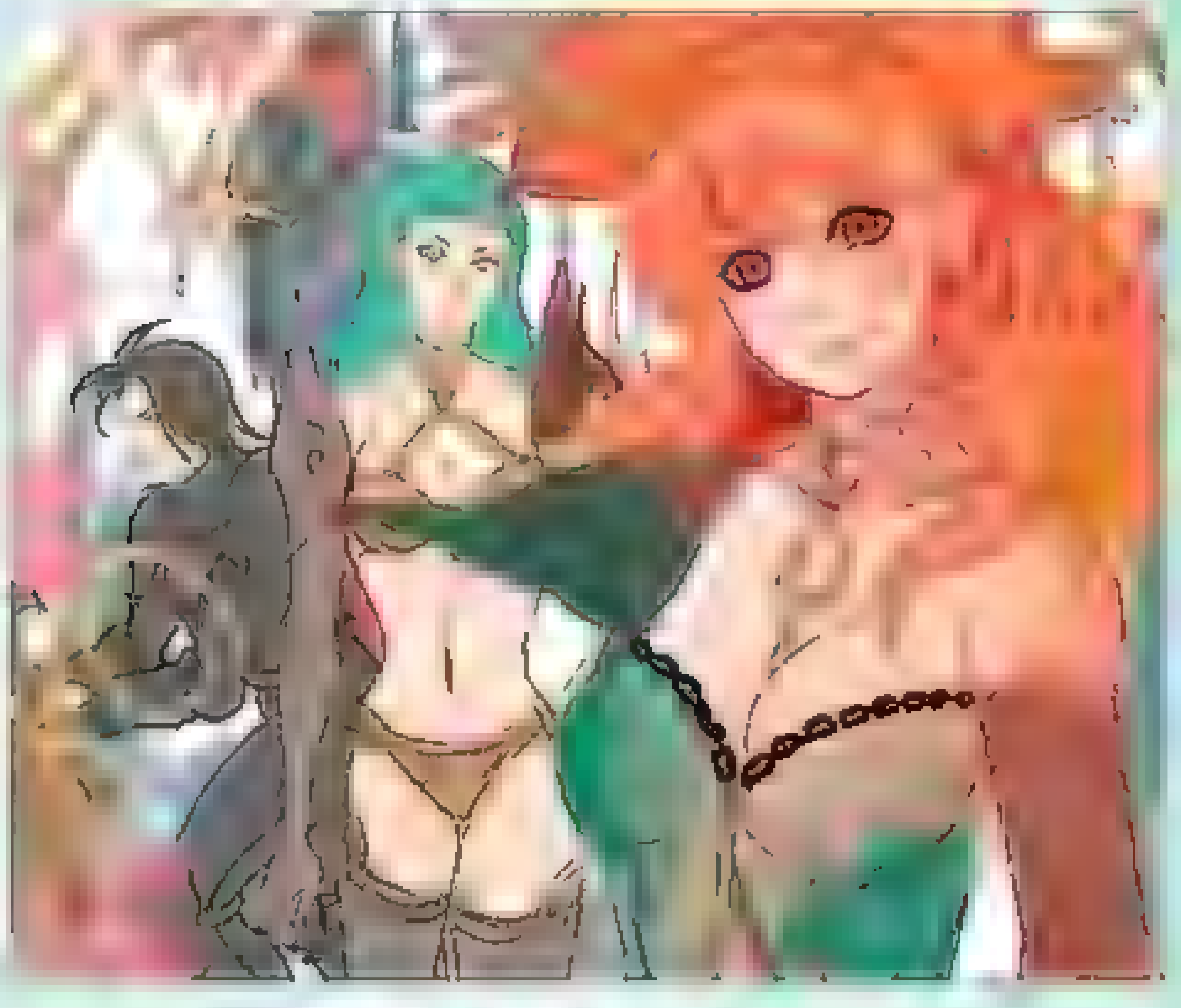
I now do the previous procedure to the other characters. After the outline is done, place solid colours inside the lines. Select Outside with the Magic Wand tool first, then Invert the selection area to Inside. I use the Bucket tool for colouring to help, select Mask Non Transparent Area in the Layer settings, which keeps the outlines away from colours. Next I go to the specific parts of the main character. I copy the Line layer and merge one to the Colour layer, leaving another for backup. I'm ready to paint further and I think of it as acrylic painting, stroking brushes over and over again for deeper quality. ⊳⊳





5 Brushing up

I continue to paint the two background characters. The outline will be buried in the colours painted over it, so it doesn't have to be correct, just enough to know its position and size. If I need to design decoration or textures, I use the Brush tool. And I use Horizontal Flip regularly to check the image from the opposite viewpoint.



PRO SECRETS

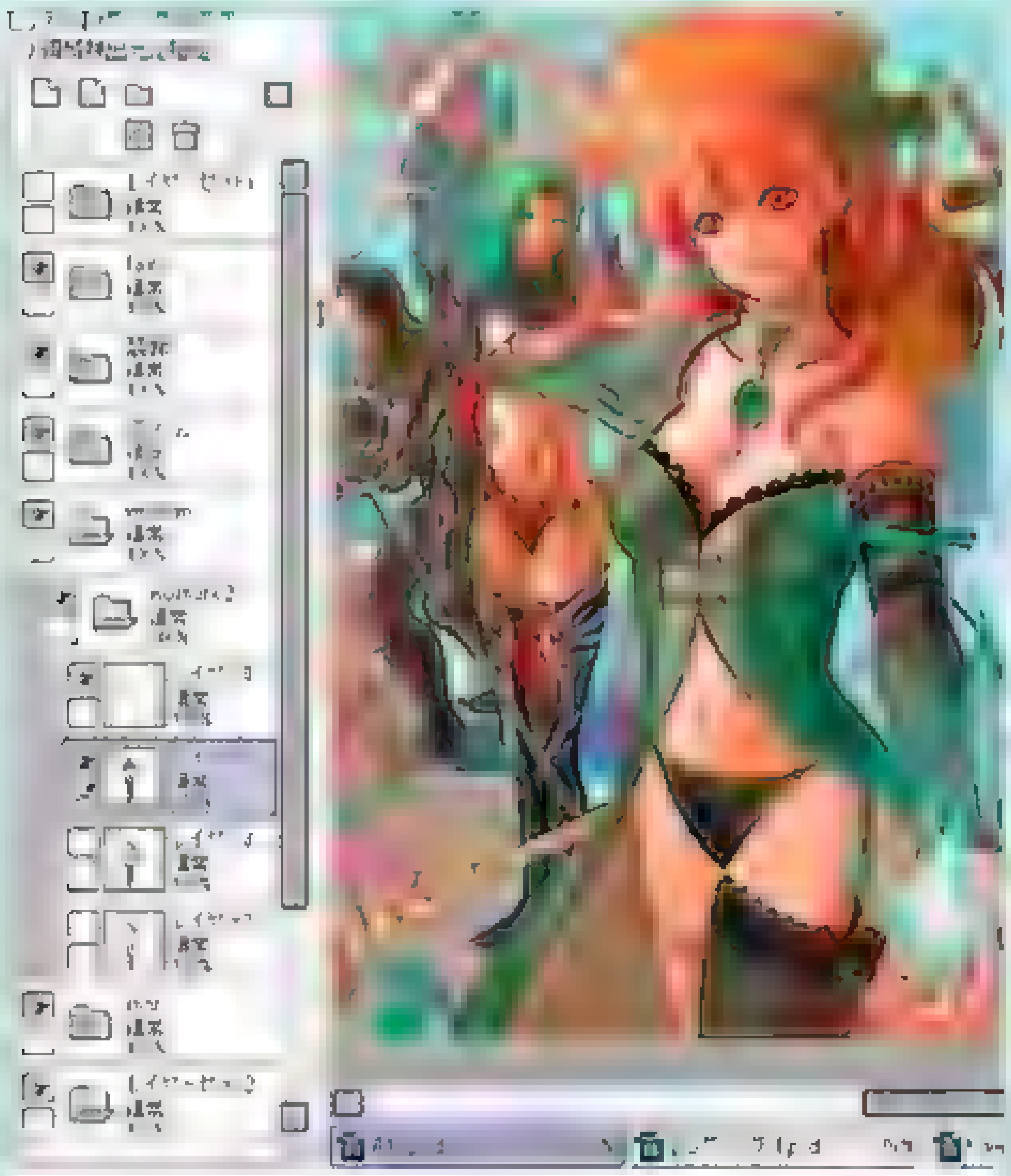
Imagine nation

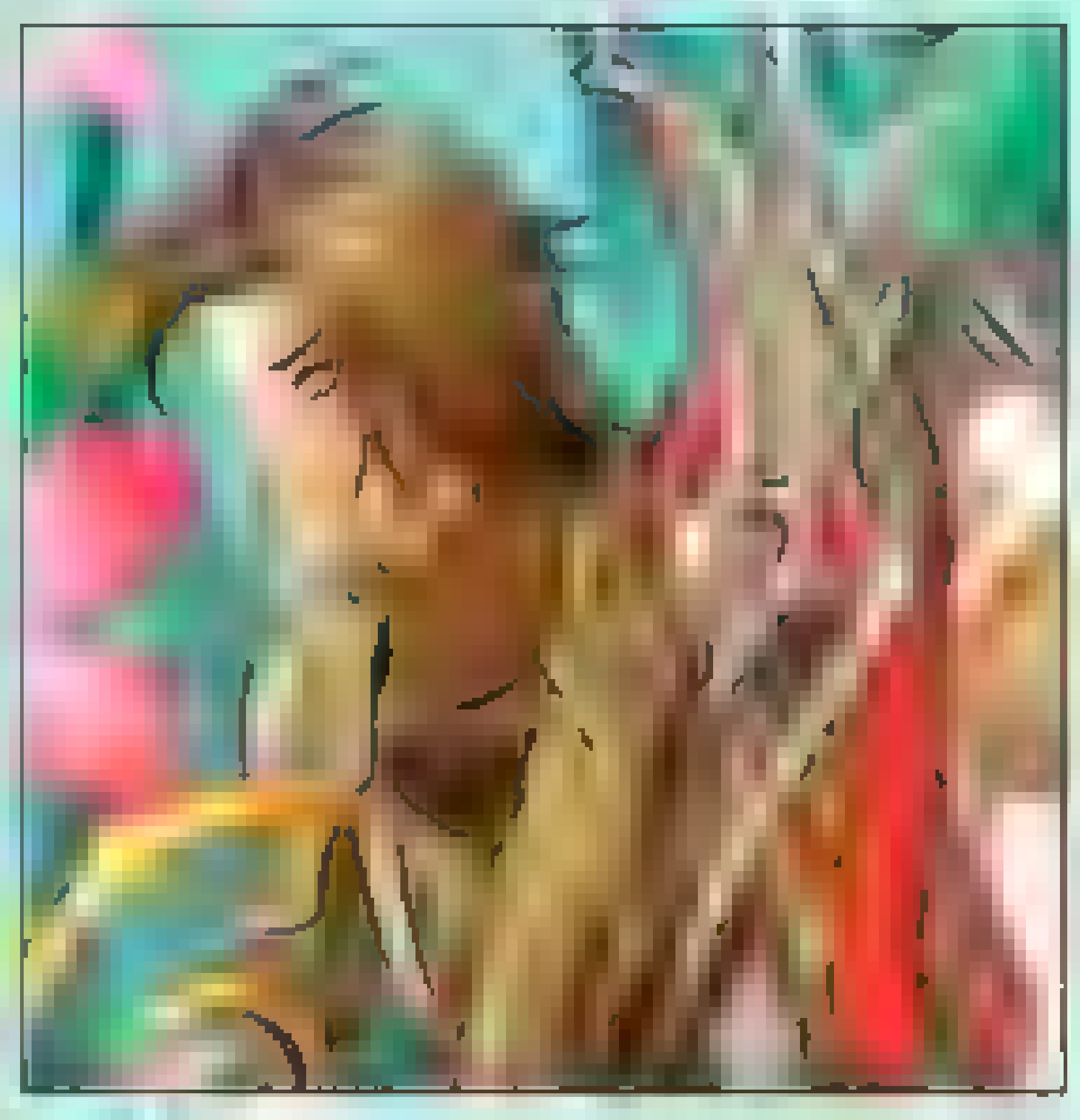
Collect mater[illegible]

Imagination is b[illegible] knowledge, but yo[illegible] to take off and dream too! Manga art is abo[illegible] the reality. There is no easy road to drawing[illegible]

6 Shadow play

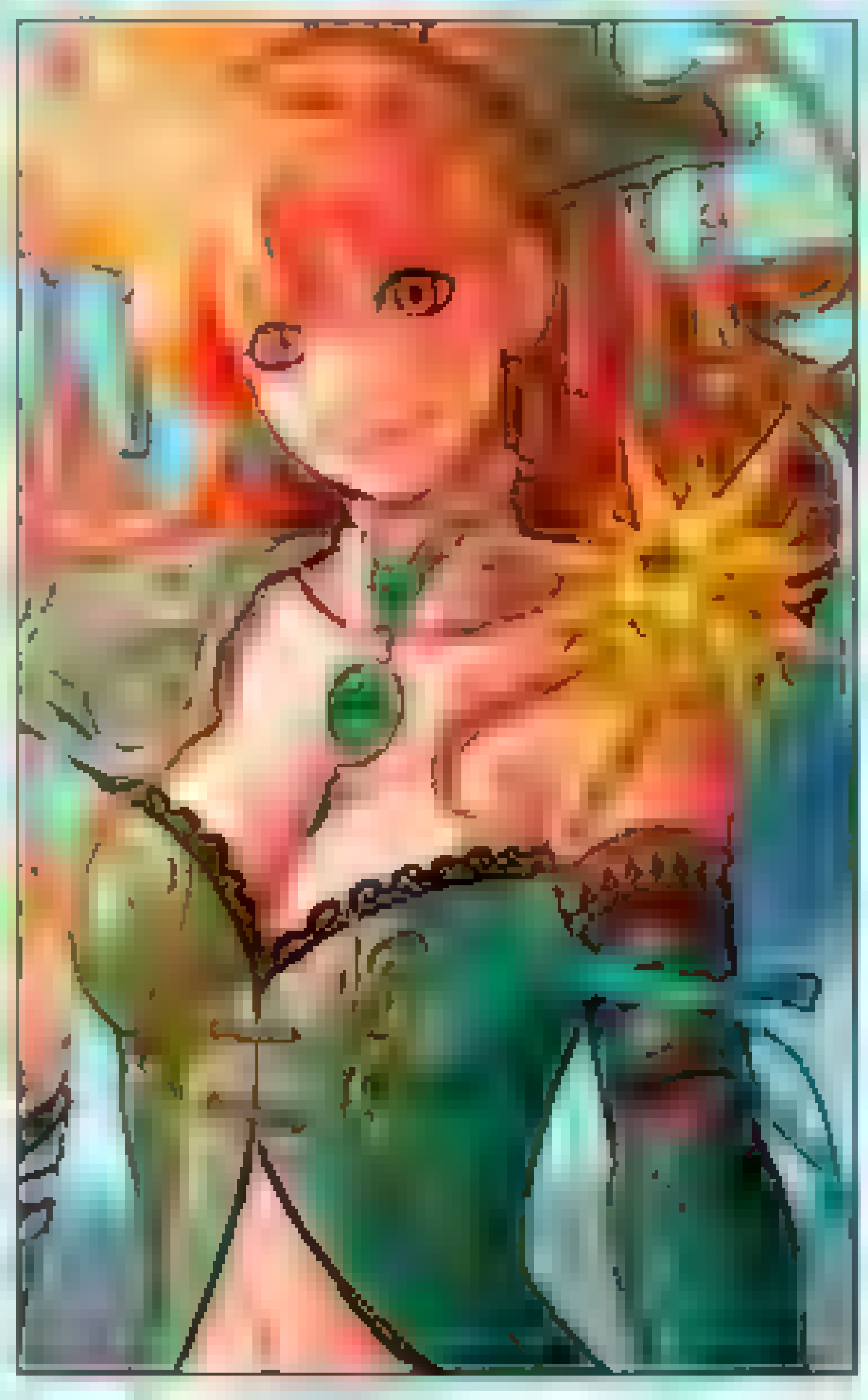
When I finish the entire painting process, I check the Clipping on the layer and place a new layer over it in Multiply mode. Now I begin painting the shadows. Clipping keeps the area you're painting shadows inside the characters. Starting shadows with light colours might be better than blocking. Back to the painting again and I create a Multiply layer for the shadows and repeat the procedure until I'm satisfied with the results.





7 Background check

When I start working on a painting, I always catch the atmosphere first by starting with a main subject. Now I find the background characters aren't quite right. I add some gold Arabesque patterns to the male character's armour, using the Brush tool. I like to use the process of thick painting techniques, which means the outlines don't have to be the final decision. You can just specify and modify the shape and size by painting later. Furthermore I like the style of full gradation and multicoloured patterning. I decide to add symbolised characters with framed decoration of Arabesque patterns and antique objects. To add contrast between these beautiful characters, I add the sun and the moon, with mysterious, if a little bit creepy, expressions on their faces.

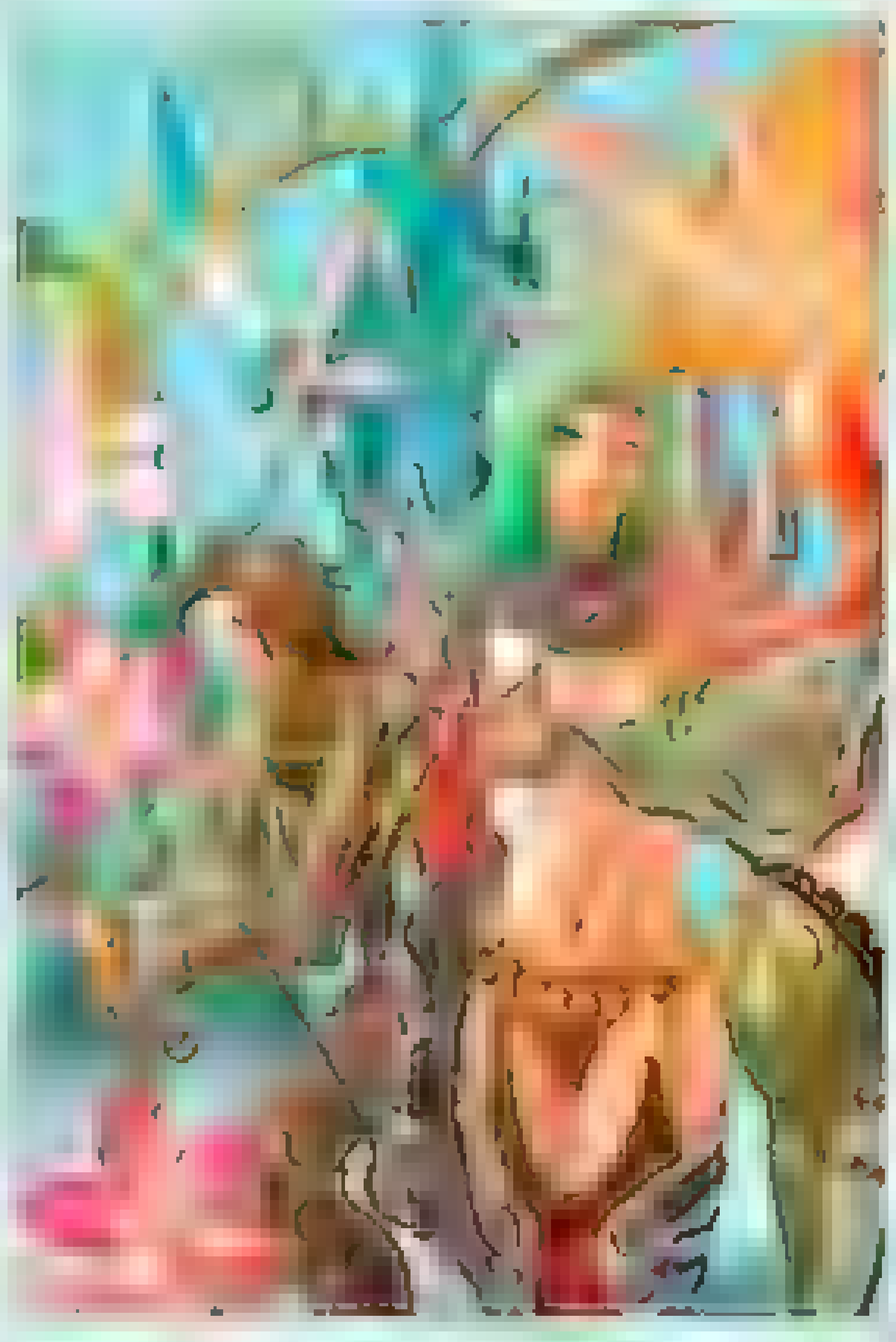


8 Recycling old work

Sometimes I use my own artworks for reference. I tried painting a sun once before, so I go back and follow my old work. I add gold patterns on the main character's clothes, too. I've not done the background yet, so I take the earlier process of outline and painting, along with layers for this too.

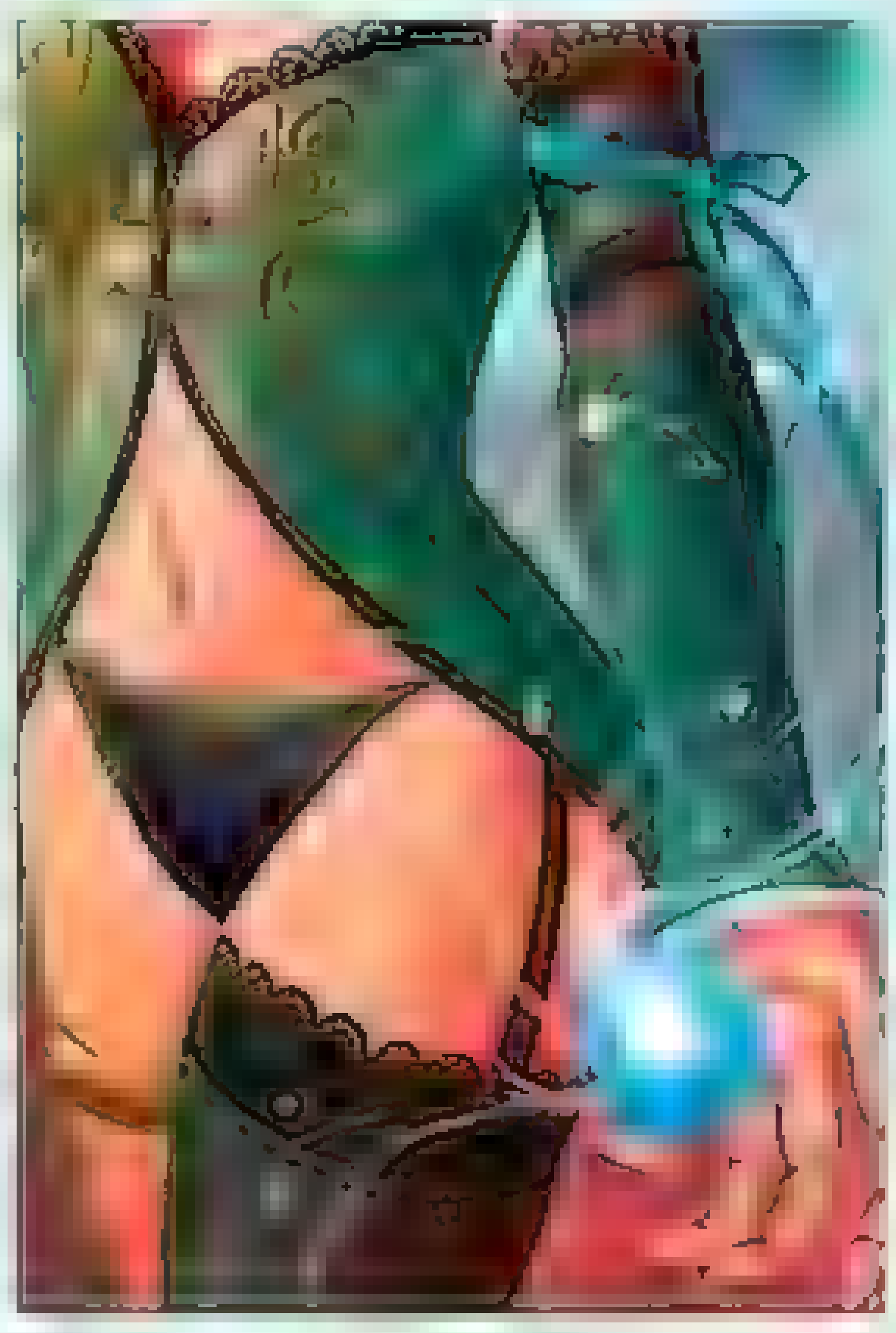
9 Tuning up

I have the basic elements of the work, so I tune up the colour with Hue, Saturation and Brightness. On top of all the layers, I create a new layer in Overlay mode. I use Bucket tool to colour it, then change the Opacity and the other settings to build the atmosphere. After that, I copy the Overlay layer to add on each part of the image (the characters, background, decorations, objects, etc). Merge layers to add each of them. At merging, I check Clip on the layer underneath. Then I delete the first Overlay layer. The flying fairy above the male character is not painted yet, so I work on it here.



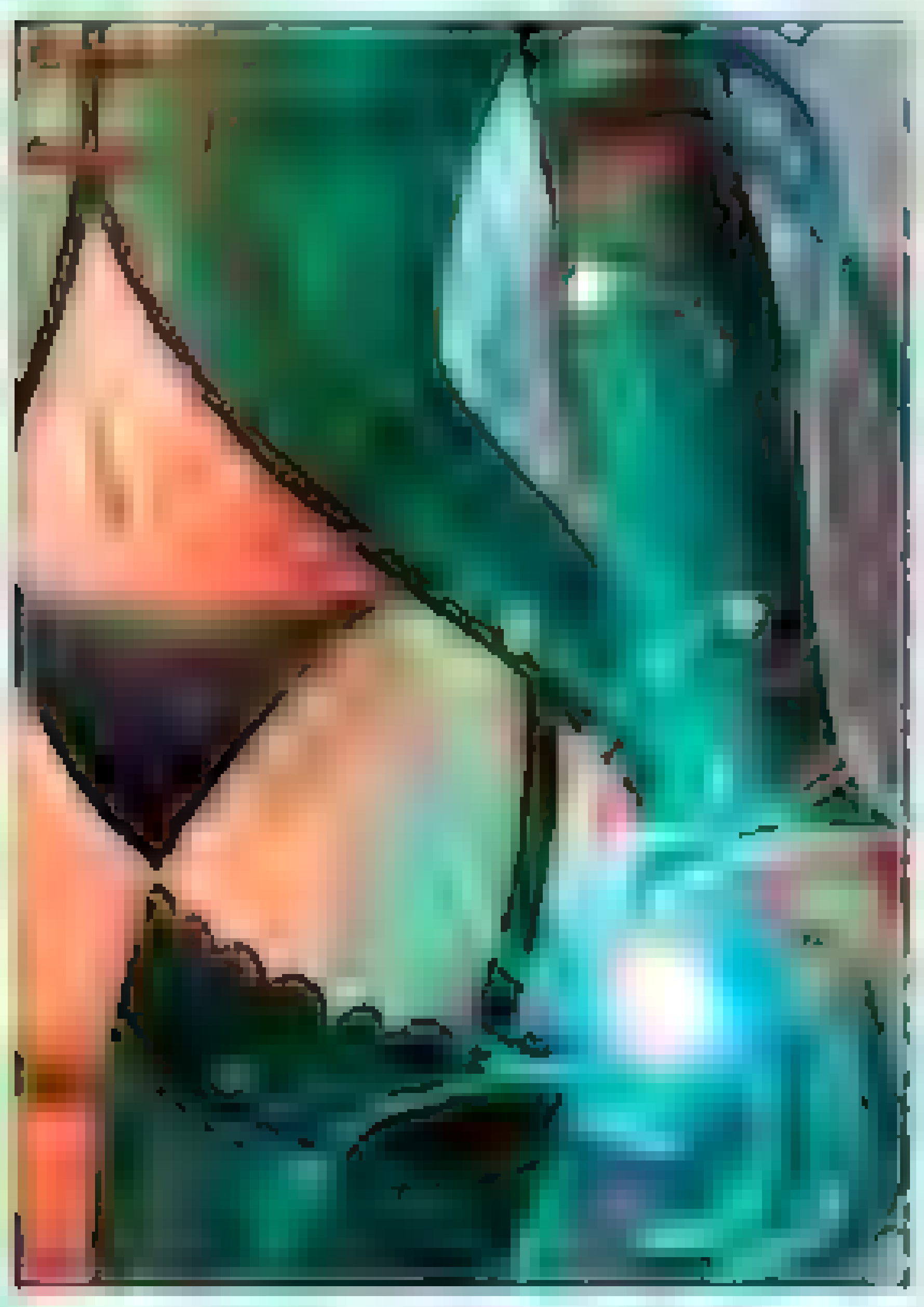
10 Polishing process

Finally I start the polishing process. The details still need work, such as the main character's wand, the lace fabric and so on. Also, the light of the magic effect on the main character's left hand. I paint the magic's core and ray of light one by one, following the outline.



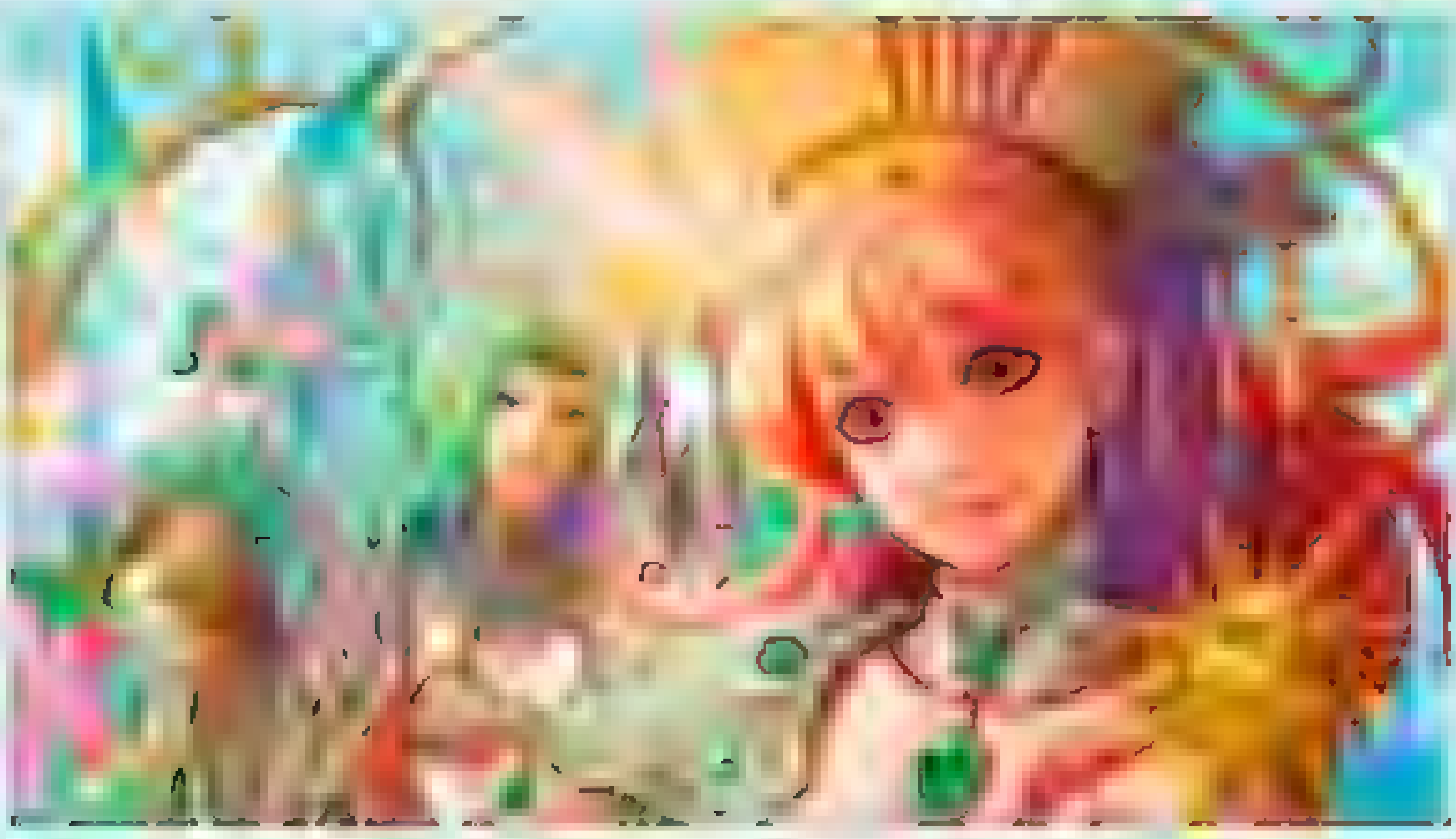
11 Making it glow

I prepare some Overlay layers and Multiply layers for the Light and Shadow effects. Also try Glow Layer, which is great for effects with the magic lights here. I want to tune it up sometimes I add paints to blend them all into the image



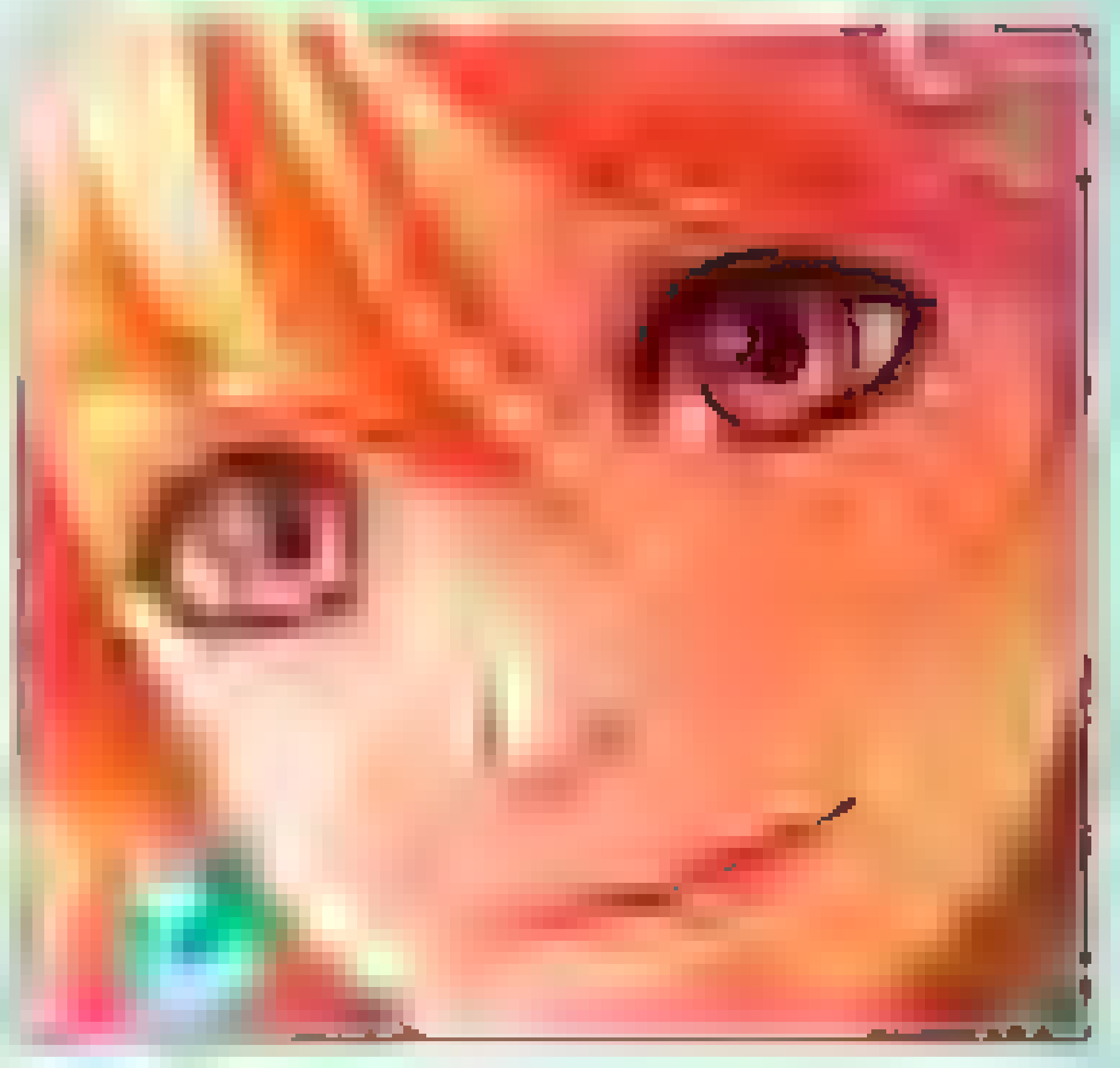
12 Adding texture

Depth of an image has a lot to do with colour, so I lighten the background with Filters>Hue/Saturation. To apply textures to the main character's clothes, I prepare them and add them to a layer above. Check Clip on the layer underneath to mask it on the unnecessary parts of the character. I change the Layer mode to Overlay and tune up the colour by Filters>Hue/Saturation. Use the Eraser tool to remove unnecessary parts of the texture and edit with Brush and AirBrush. I need to fix a bit on the male character, so I select his arm with the Lasso tool and Cut>Paste, then edit his body and sword



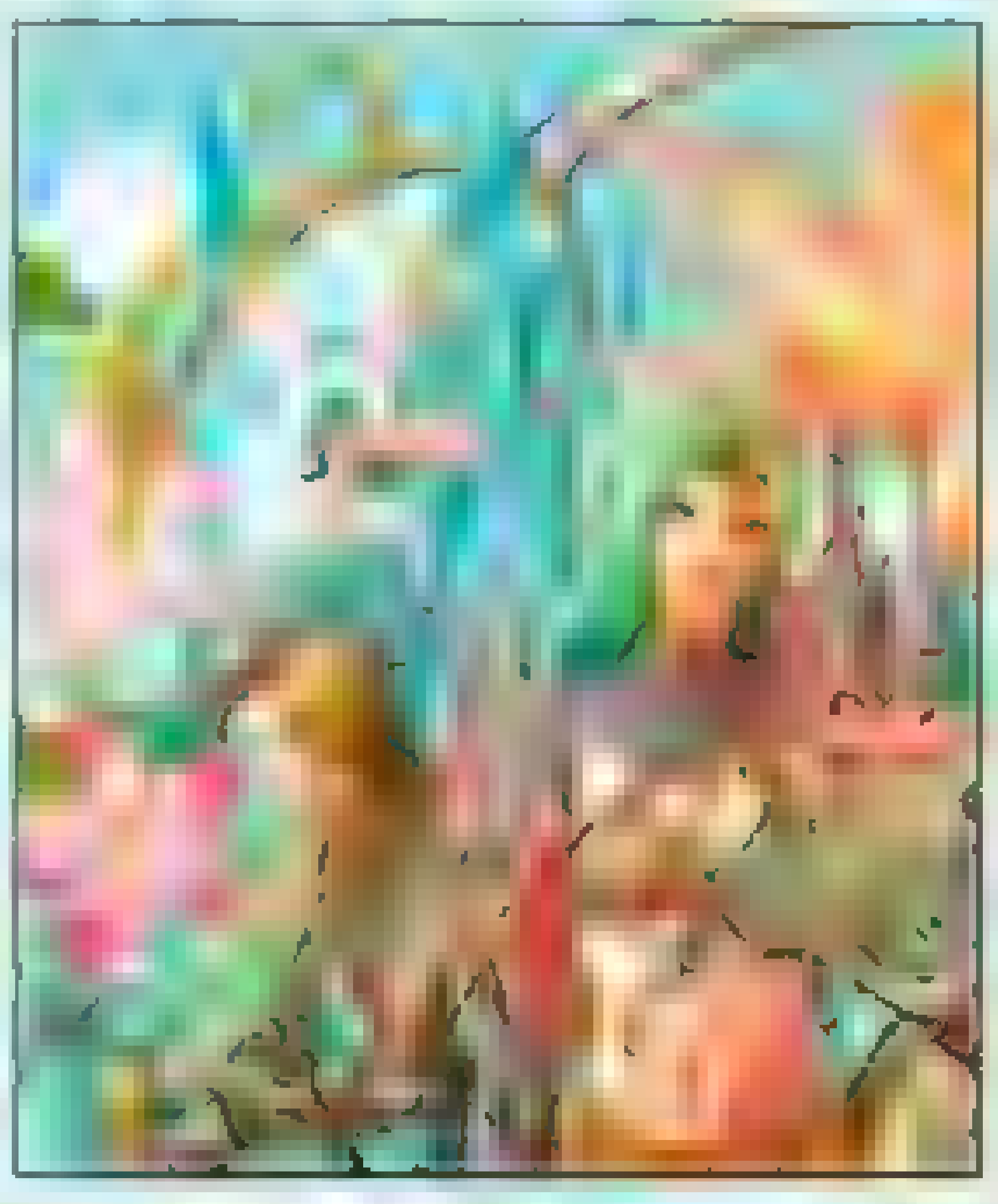
13 Filter effects

I'm close to the final artwork. We need more textures, for a deeper quality, like an analog painting. The main character wears a hat, so we need texture for this. I repeat this process for several textures. I came up with a big change to the atmosphere, applying more effect filters. When I work with light colours, I try not to use darker colours much, so I add some hints of colour on those parts and for this I choose purple



14 Watercolour affect

I feel like adding more textures, so I paste them onto the texture layer, in Lighten/Darken mode, then erase unnecessary parts. Another idea is to add some watercolour style texture for an analog feel. To do this I prepare a new layer and paint colours with Brush tool, etc. Then I set Tool Effect>Canvas Material to Watercolor2. Also, I try Tool Effect>Watercolor Edge (change the parameters for the result you want). Under this setting, paint more and you'll get watercolour effects



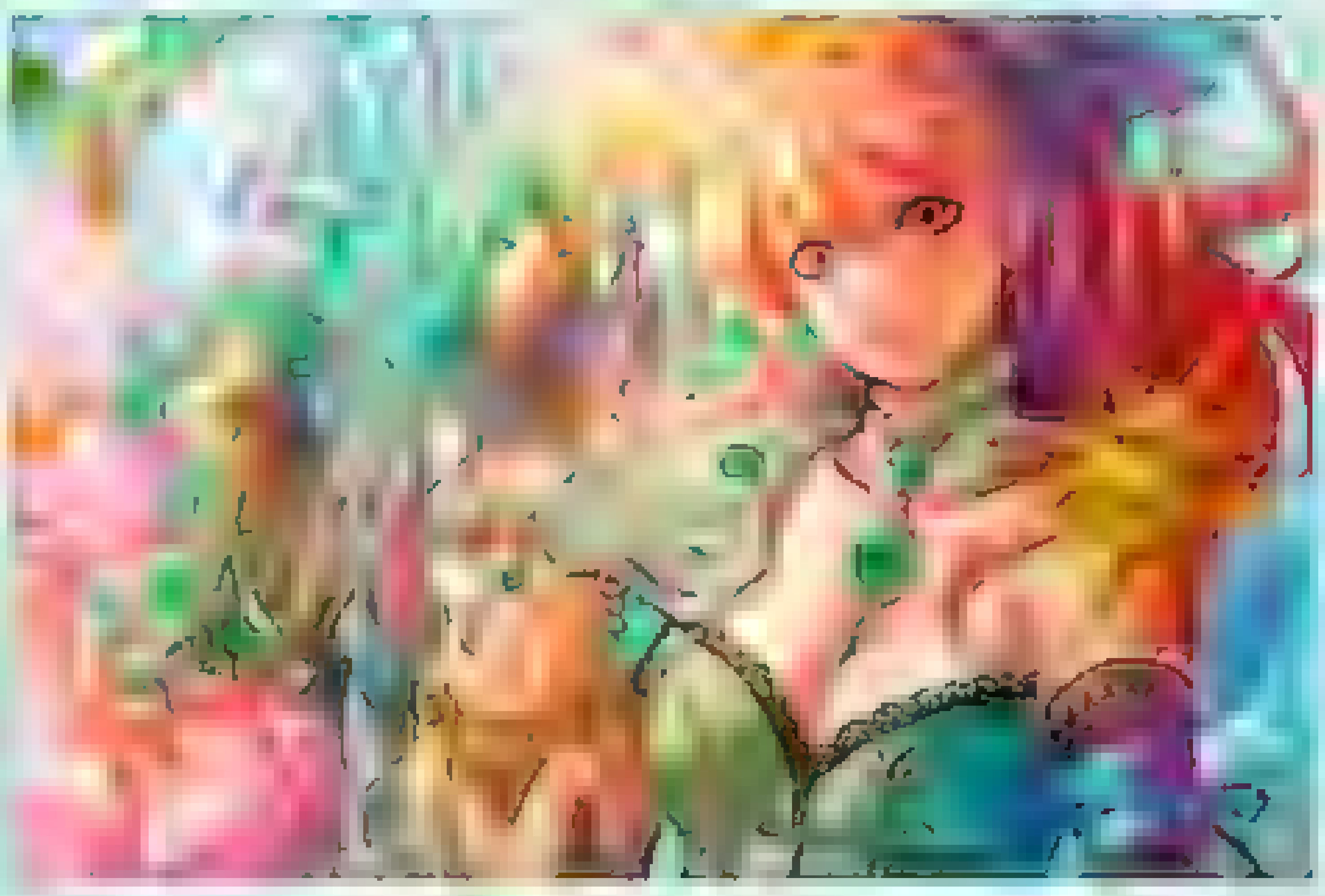
PRO SECRETS

Love what you do

[illegible] This means [illegible] what one [illegible] will do best. [illegible] what you do and don't give up a picture until it's finished.

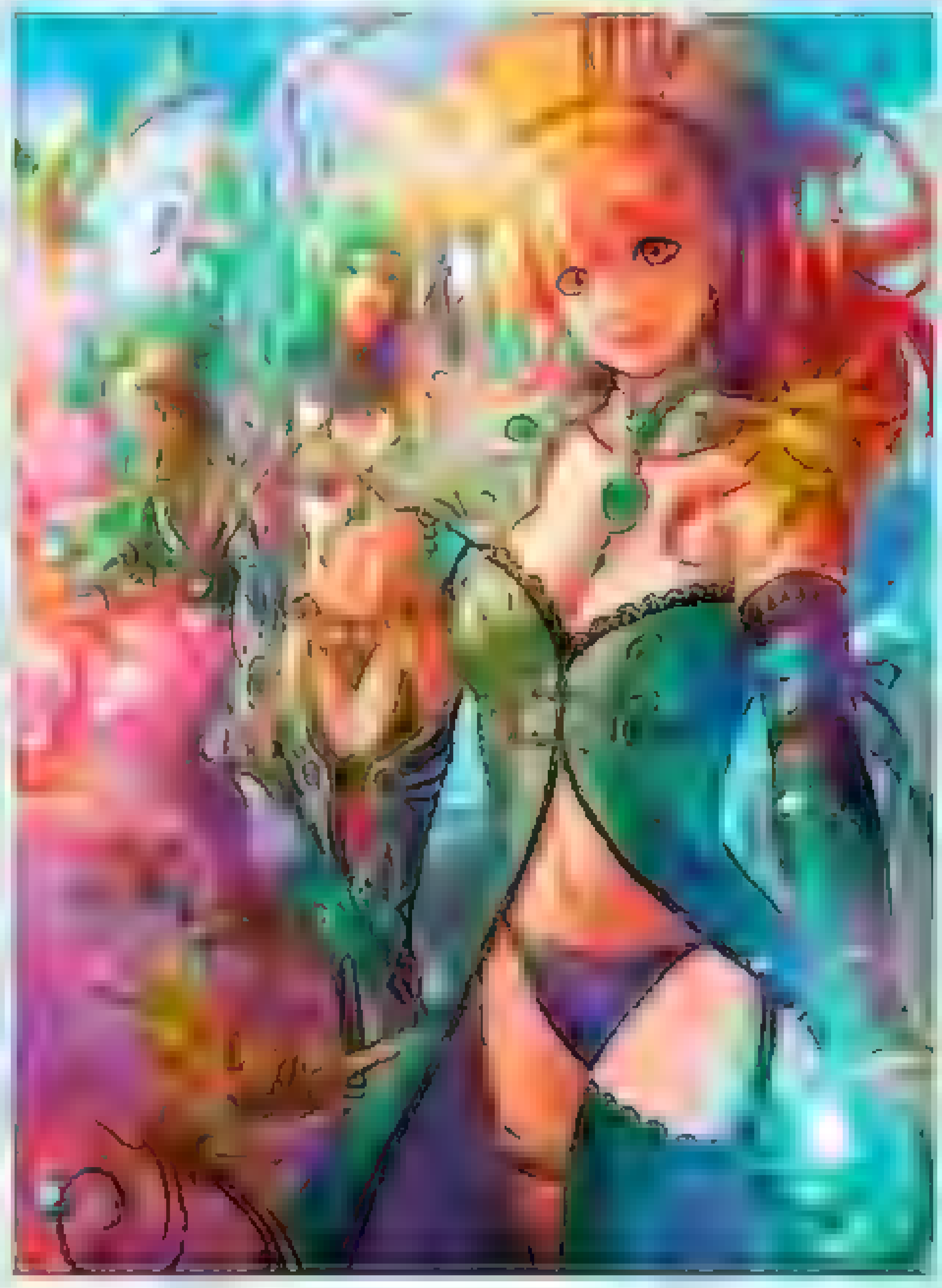
15 Adding light

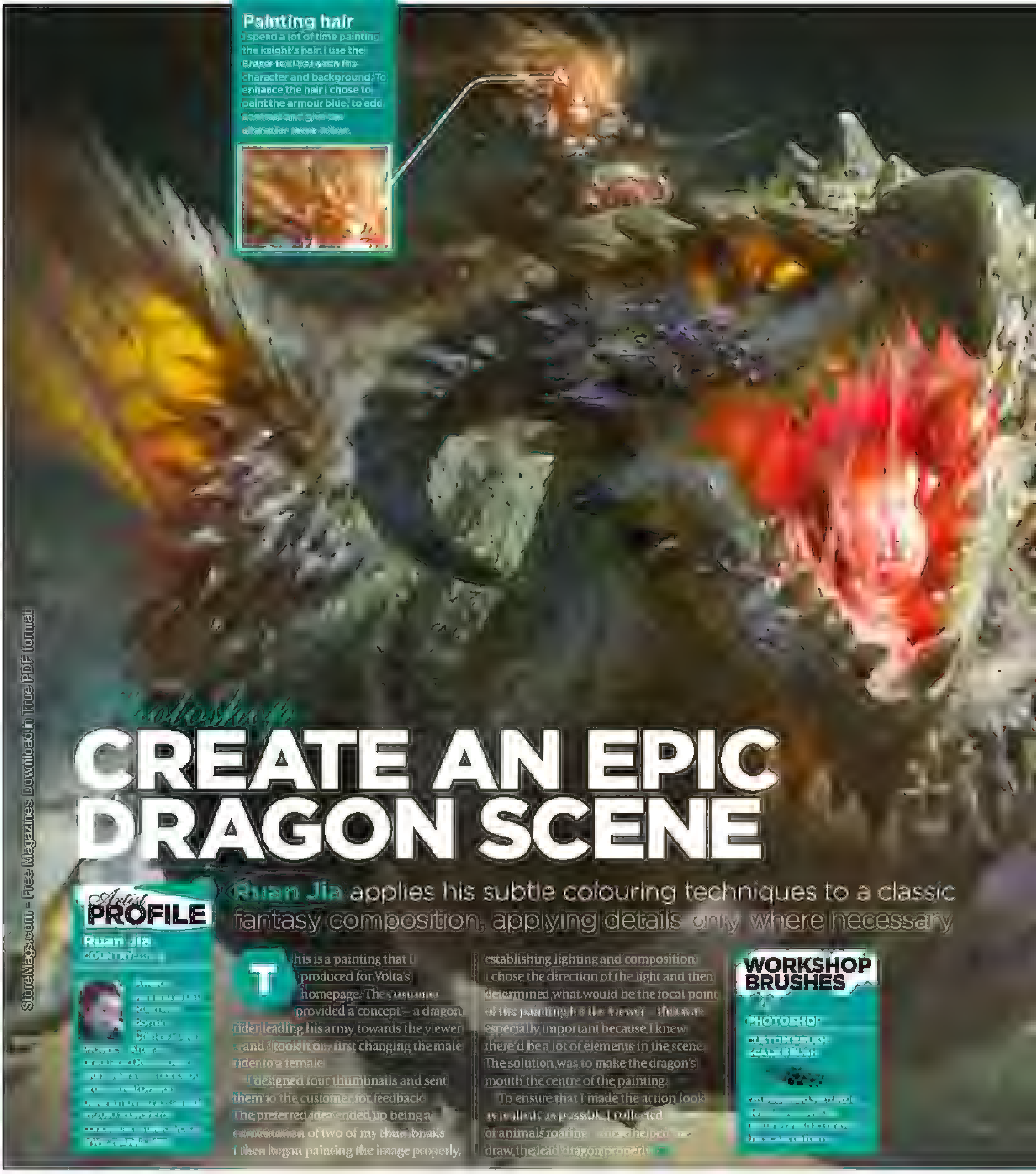
On the internet I found a Light Leak effect. Mainly used in photographics, this adds some extra light and colour, like a lens flare effect. I found this makes the image more interesting. To simulate it, I create a new layer in Screen mode and some solid colours. I use the Brush tool and change the layer parameters to tune it up. I add a bit more texture here, too



16 Finishing touches

The more you tweak, the better your painting looks, so edit it again and again for as long as you want. It might have been fun to come up with more effects, or secondary objects like the sun and the moon. But it's also important to decide where to stop, either for a deadline or for the sake of the artwork. You should care about this point especially. This took me 15 hours. Good luck!





Painting hair

I spend a lot of time painting the knight's hair. I use the Eraser tool between the character and background. To enhance the hair I chose to paint the armour blue, to add contrast and give the character more colour.

Photoshop

CREATE AN EPIC DRAGON SCENE

Ruan Jia applies his subtle colouring techniques to a classic fantasy composition, applying details only where necessary

Artist PROFILE

Ruan Jia

COUNTRY: [illegible]

[illegible]

This is a painting that I produced for Volta's homepage. The customer provided a concept – a dragon rider leading his army towards the viewer – and I took it on, first changing the male rider to a female.

I designed four thumbnails and sent them to the customer for feedback. The preferred idea ended up being a combination of two of my thumbnails. I then began painting the image properly, establishing lighting and composition. I chose the direction of the light and then determined what would be the focal point of the painting for the viewer – this was especially important because I knew there'd be a lot of elements in the scene. The solution was to make the dragon's mouth the centre of the painting.

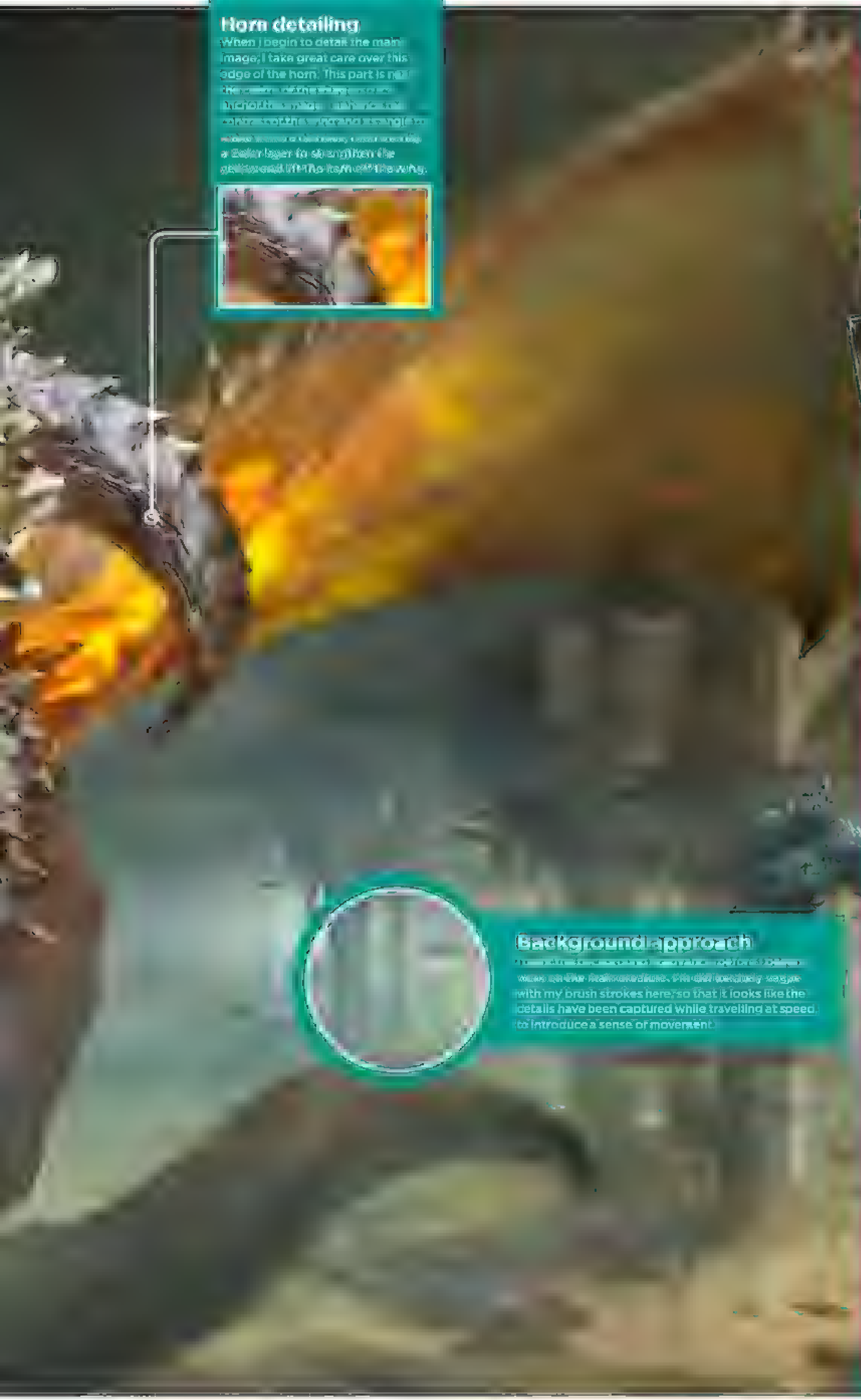
To ensure that I made the action look as realistic as possible, I collected [illegible] of animals roaring, which helped me draw the lead dragon properly.

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH: SCALE BRUSH

[illegible]



Horn detailing

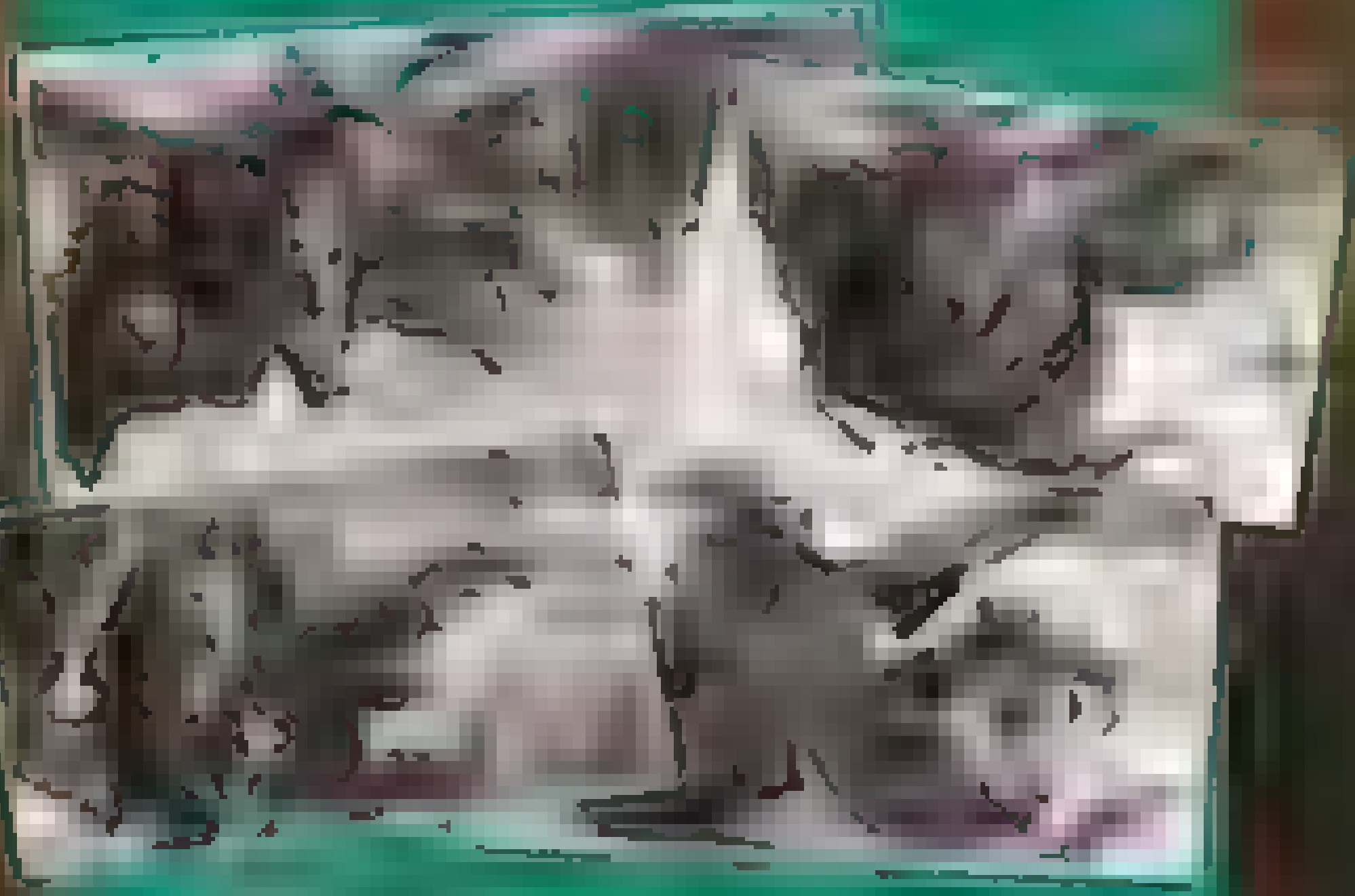
When I begin to detail the main image, I take great care over this edge of the horn. This part is near [illegible] a Color layer to strengthen the [illegible]

Background approach

[illegible] with my brush strokes here, so that it looks like the details have been captured while travelling at speed, to introduce a sense of movement.

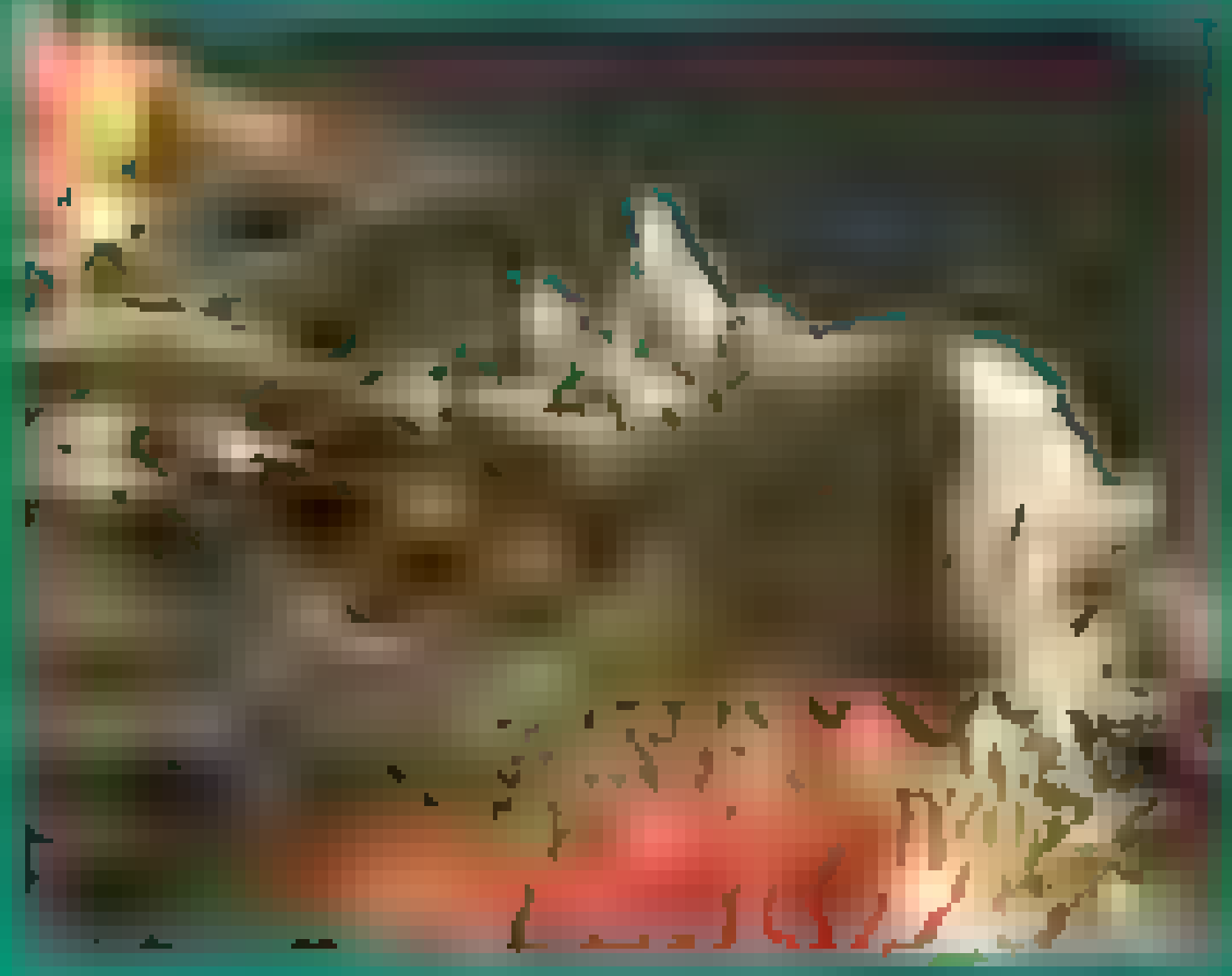
How I create...

AN ARMY OF FLYING DRAGONS



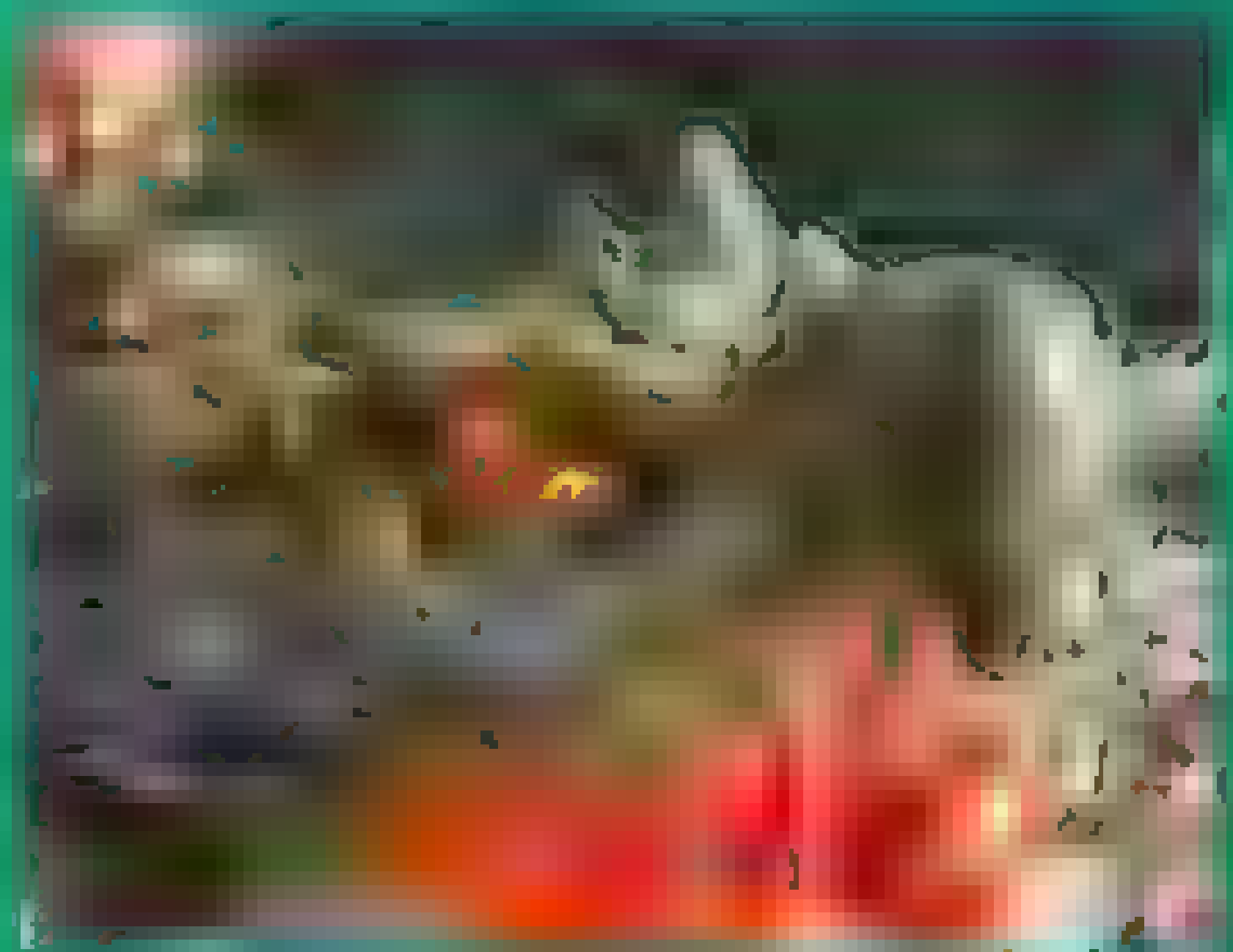
1 Draw thumbnails

These are the black and white sketches I created to show to the client. I tried a different quantity of heads to experiment with the creature design; I also adjusted the composition depending on the number of heads. The customer chose the upper right and lower left thumbnails, so I decided to combine the two into one painting.



2 Careful detailing

I'm obsessed with little details and always bear in mind whether they're appropriate for the subject. I use a custom texture brush to draw in the scale patterns on the dragon's head, focusing on the eye, cheek and jaw. This is the painting's focal point and [illegible]



3 Adding highlights

I like the shadowing around the eye, but the colours feel wrong. I feel the main colouring should be more realistic, so I add [illegible] and make the red of the mouth brighter. The highlights now have more contrast – it feels brighter and enhances the dragon's face.

Photoshop

REIMAGINING A FANTASY CLASSIC

The centaur from Greek mythology is painted in a whole new light after a distracted **Young-june Choi** sketches one during a meeting at work…

My image for this workshop all started from one of the sketches that I did on my diary during a meeting at work. Although I should have been concentrating on what was being said in the room, my head was somewhere else at the time.

I usually write down the things that are being discussed, but I just can't shake off the habit of sketching. I've found that doodling is a great way to improve your drawing skills, as well as a means of expressing your imagination in visual form without any restrictions.

There are many rough sketches in my diary, and for this workshop I simply picked the one that I liked the most and developed things from there. Kentauros is my take on the centaur, one of the many creatures from Greek mythology, and I've pictured him as a mean and brutal individual. I wanted to develop the classic creature that's half human, half horse, and in my initial drawings I explored their appearance and surroundings. The concept is that they're a proud, cultured race that lives high up in the mountains and watches over the world below.

Artist PROFILE

Young-june Choi

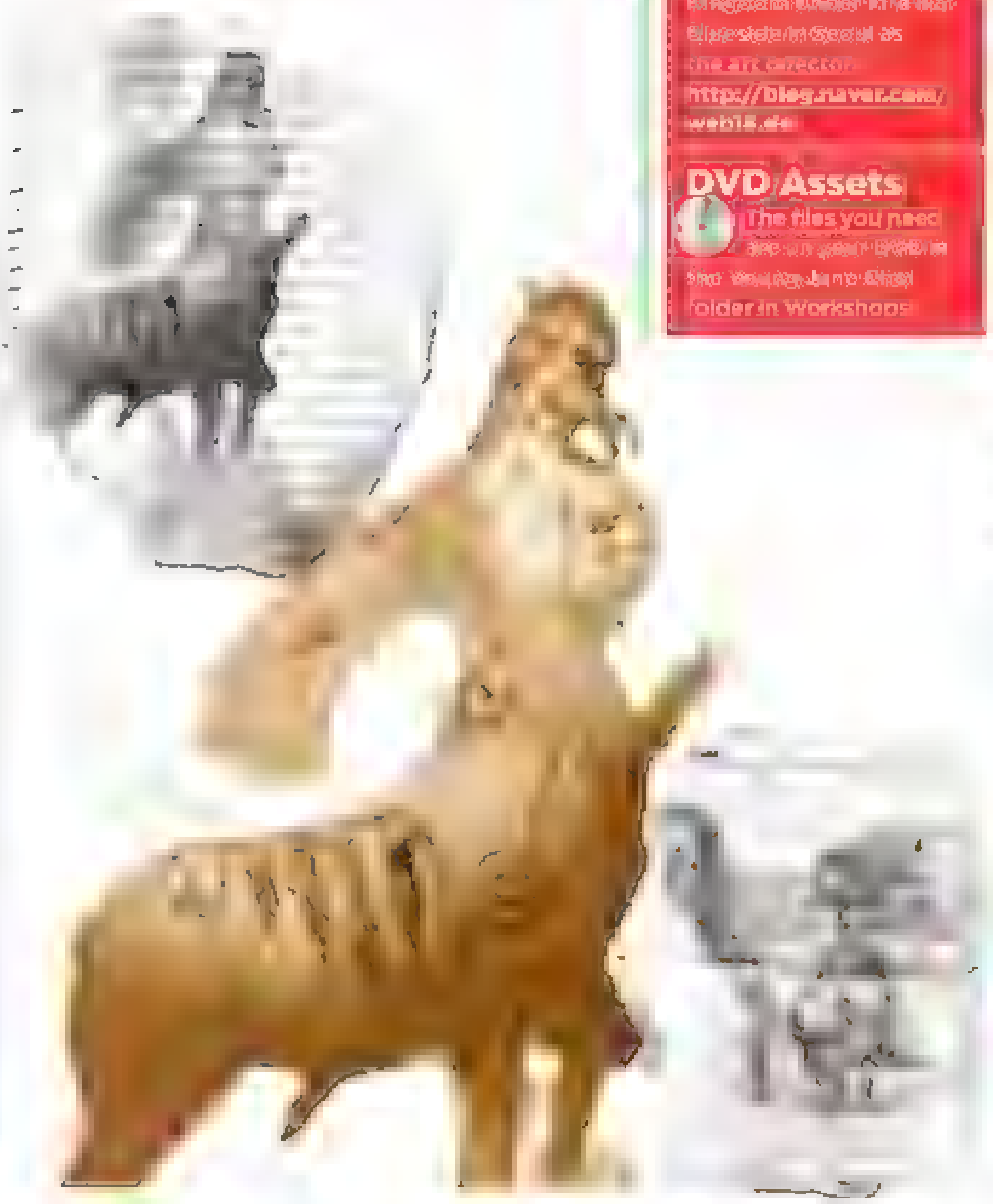
COUNTRY: South Korea

Young can be found online under the name of GYZANG and is currently working on Kingdom Under Fire II at Blueside in Seoul as the art director.

http://blog.naver.com/web18.do

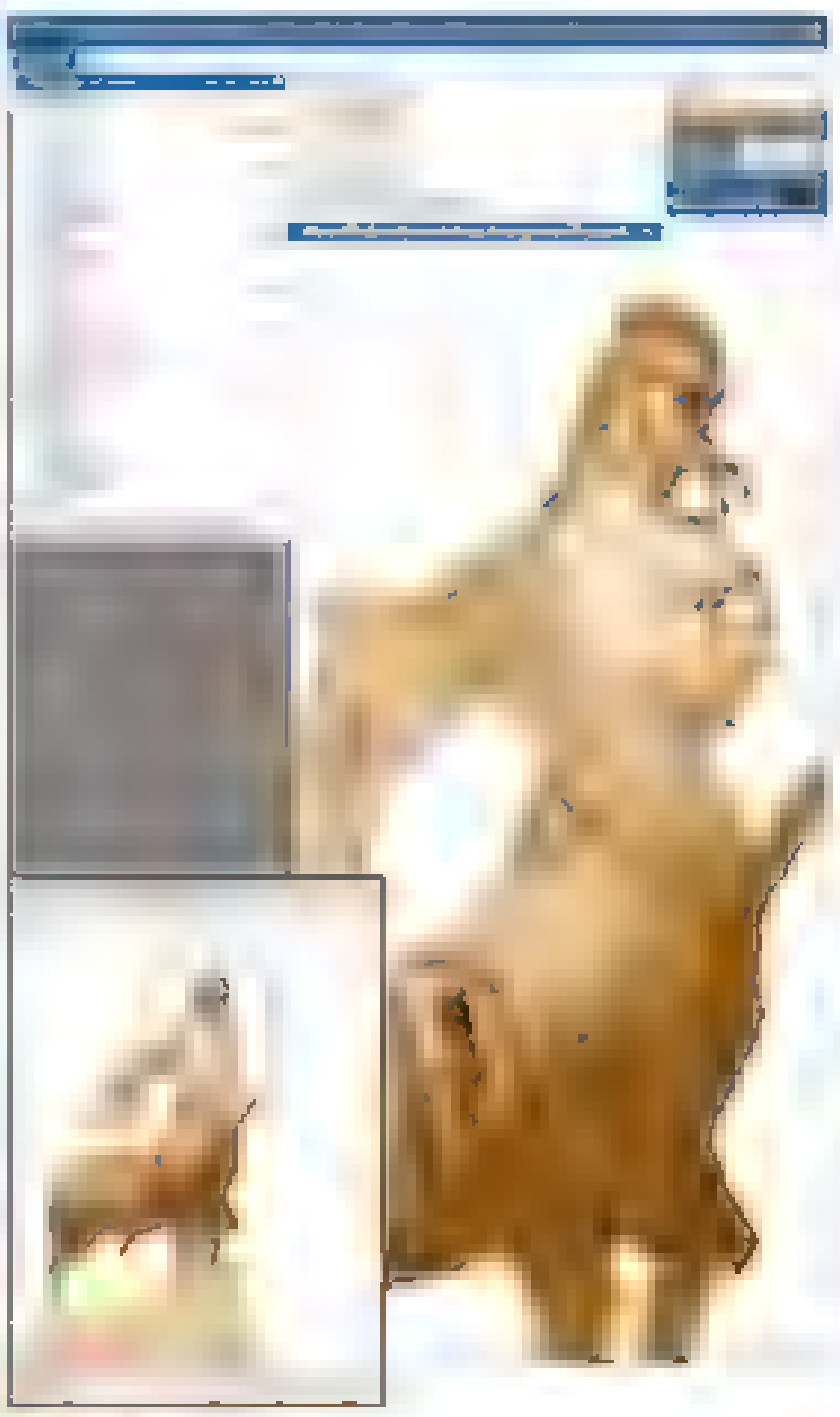
DVD Assets

The files you need are on your DVD in the Young-june Choi folder in Workshops.



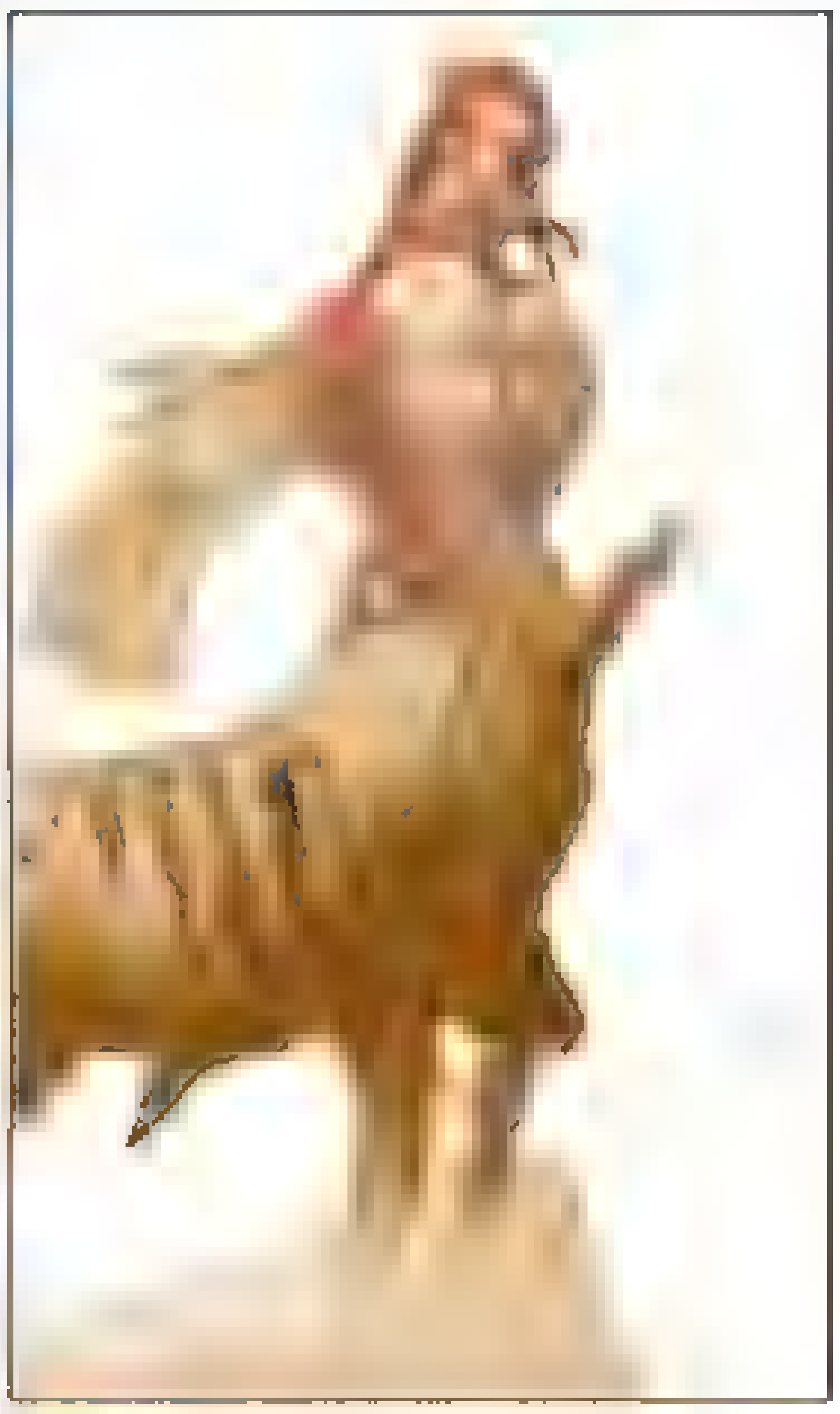
1 Putting together the rough sketch

From my collection of thumbnails that I did during the meeting I pick out my centaur sketch and scan it in. I clean up the sketch and think about the character's environment, quickly drawing in a rough background. Usually it takes me a fair bit of time to figure out the surrounding elements that'll work well with a character. This time I'm lucky, my first attempt at a mountain setting feels right.



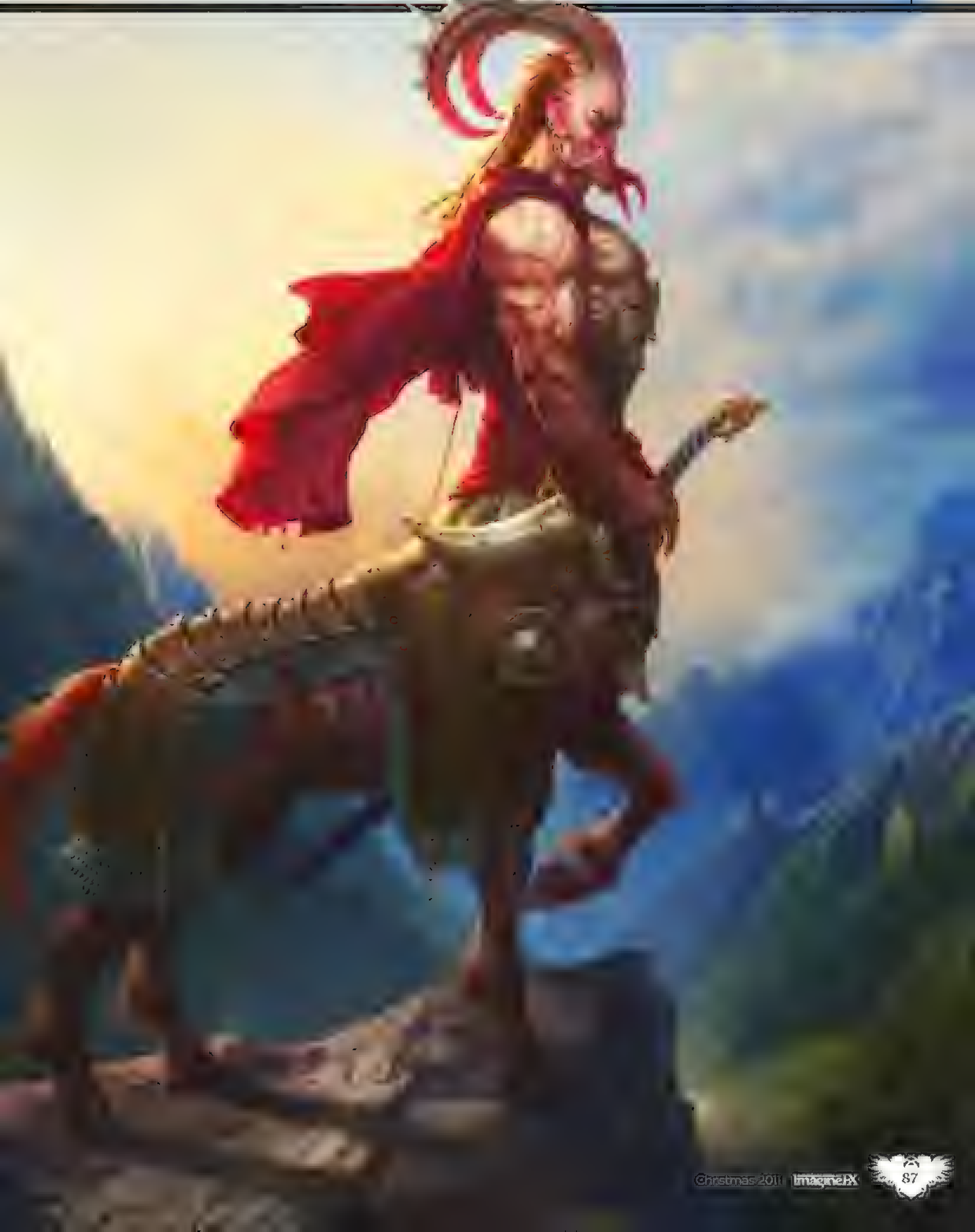
2 My Photoshop setup

There are a couple of things I need to do in Photoshop that'll help the painting process. I select Window>Arrange>New Window for my image of the scanned sketch and I use this as my Navigator window. I do this because choosing Window>Navigator overlays red lines on the image. They're a nuisance when I want to see the whole of the image and set the correct colour balance. It also displays jagged pixels, which is another reason for not using the Navigator tool.



3 Basic colouring

After placing a Multiply layer over the sketch, I begin colouring my centaur. Normally, I would proceed by adding volume, silhouettes and shadows using a brush. But this time around I do this step based on the pen sketch, emphasising individual pen lines while colouring. I repeat the process on different layers, using either Image>Adjustment>Color Balance or Image>Adjustment>Hue/Saturation to try out various colours. This enables me to pick one that goes best with the image.



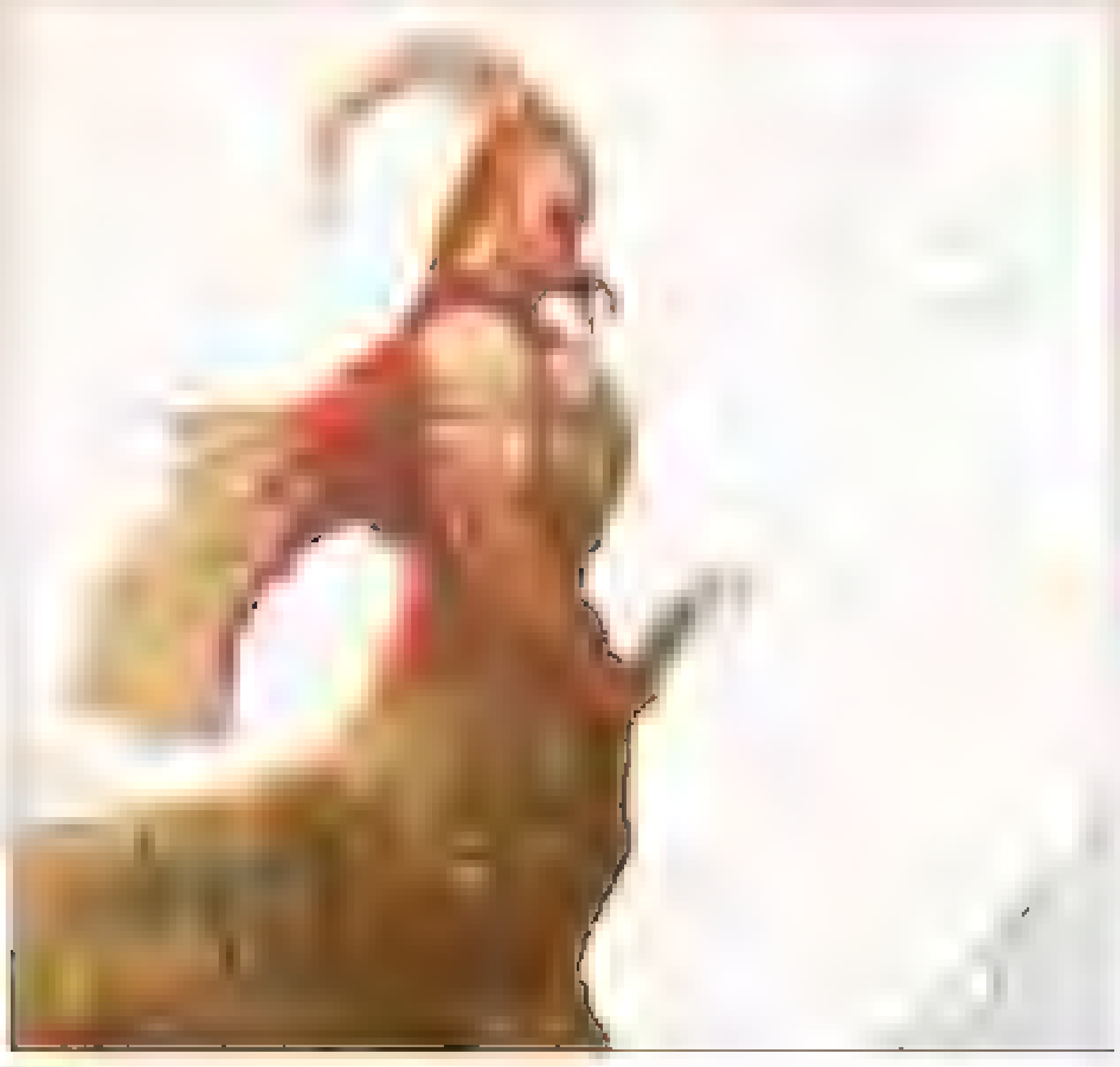
4 My layer approach

I try to leave a few layers that I think might be changed later. When I'm in the mid phase of the work I'll merge the layers and adjust the Color Balance and Bright/Contrast. I'll also make some adjustments to the whole image. But for now, once the colouring is done, I merge the sketch layer with the colour layers and try to separate the main character from the background image. At this early stage I work separately on the character and background. I think this is an efficient way to boost the quality of the image and also enables you to try different ideas

PRO SECRETS

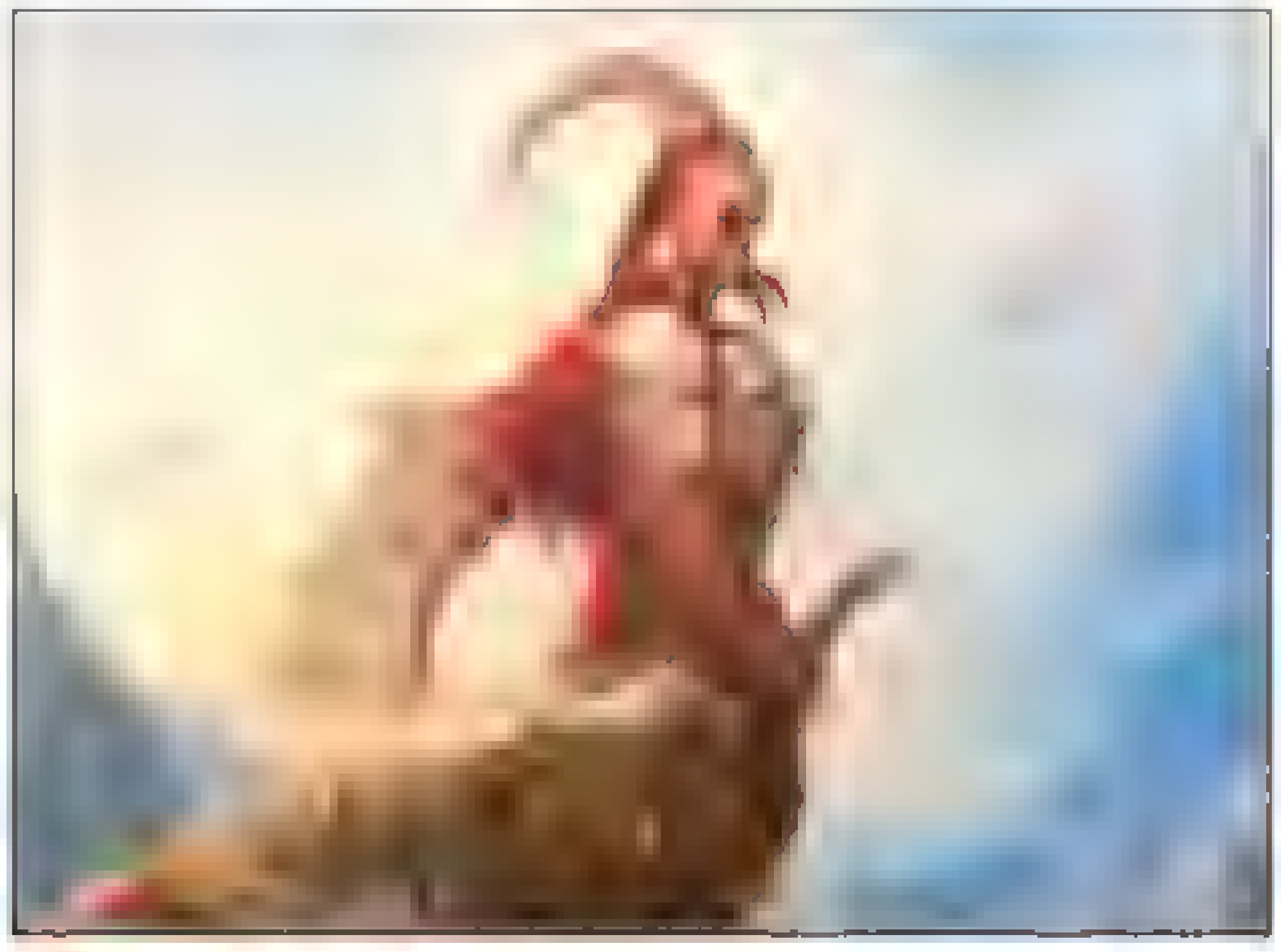
Be flexible with the mood lighting

[illegible]



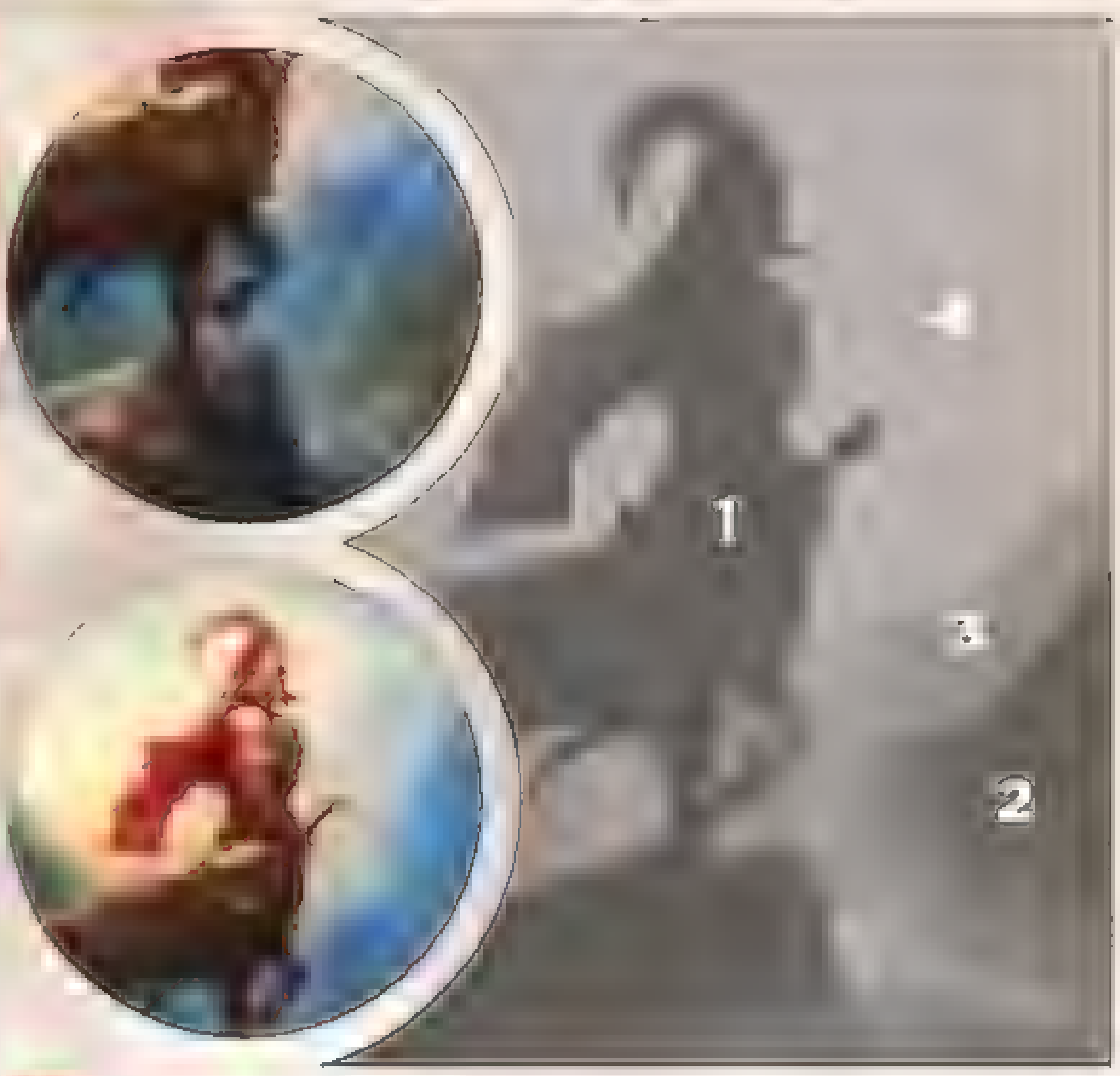
5 Directing the composition

This is the stage where I plan how to construct the whole image While I construct the scene, I implement the light setting and other elements to a certain extent such as the direction of light, what to put in the background, and the colour of the sky. My lighting style tends to err on the side of fantasy rather than realism



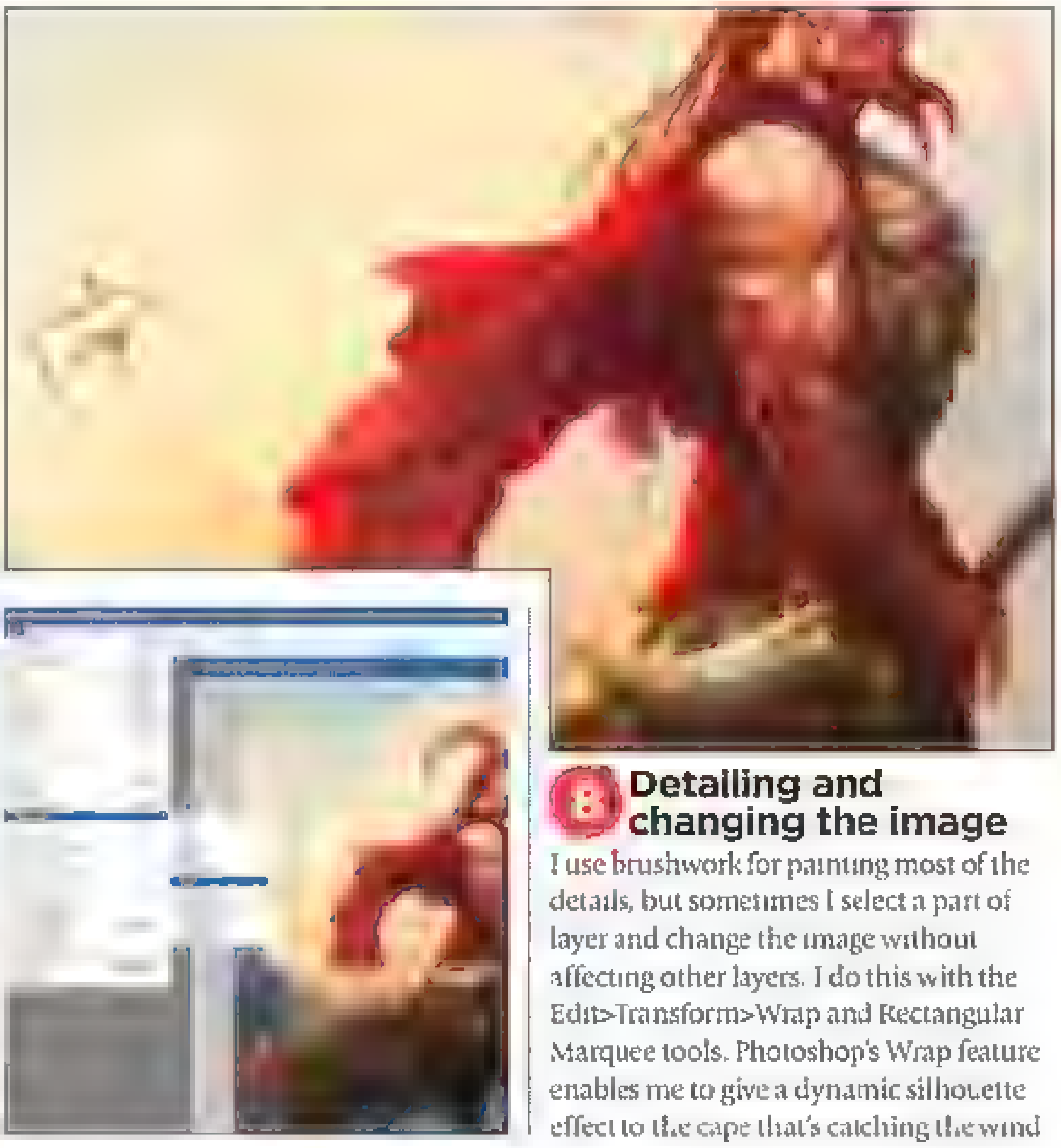
6 Refining the scene

With the character basics and his surrounding in place, I complete the design. However, if something comes up that I think is better than the initial concept, I add this to the image. I adjust the depth of lighting and tone for the character and background layers to improve the overall quality. I also start adding details to the image



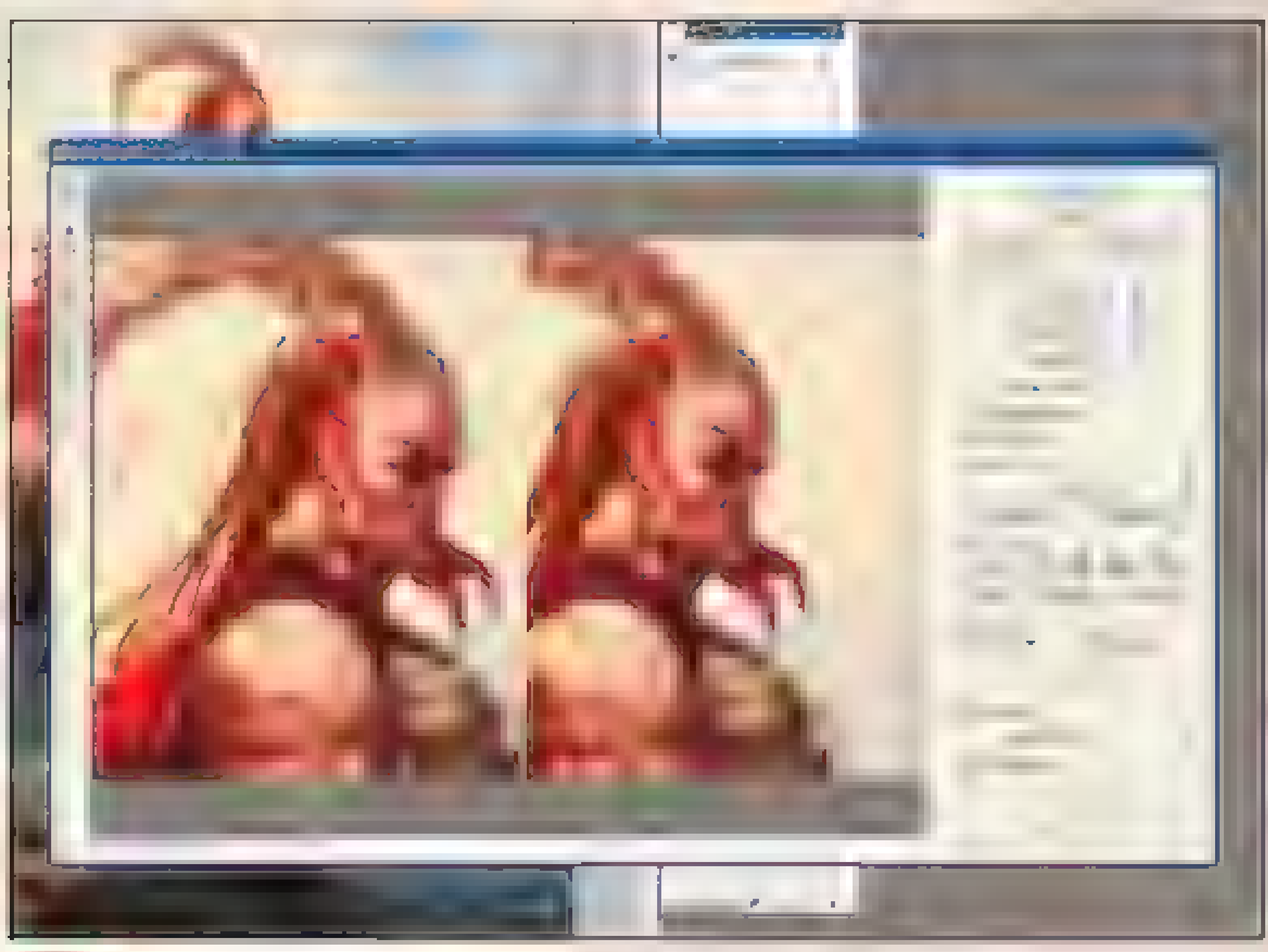
7 Get a sense of distance

For the most part I work on the character and the background. However, now's the time to consider the fore- and mid-ground, too. In my screenshot the area labelled '3' is the landscape that's furthest from the viewer. Together with the second area of landscape labelled '2', this gives the scene a vast sense of space. At this stage it helps to create layers for the cliffs, mountain and river in the mid distance, and the sky, and work on them using Hue/Saturation or Bright/Contrast intuitively. If you add another layer between them, you can use the Air brush to generate atmospheric depth. Speaking of which, you can add a depth of field effect on those layers using the Filter>Gaussian Blur option, and make them more dynamic and realistic using Filter>Motion Blur.



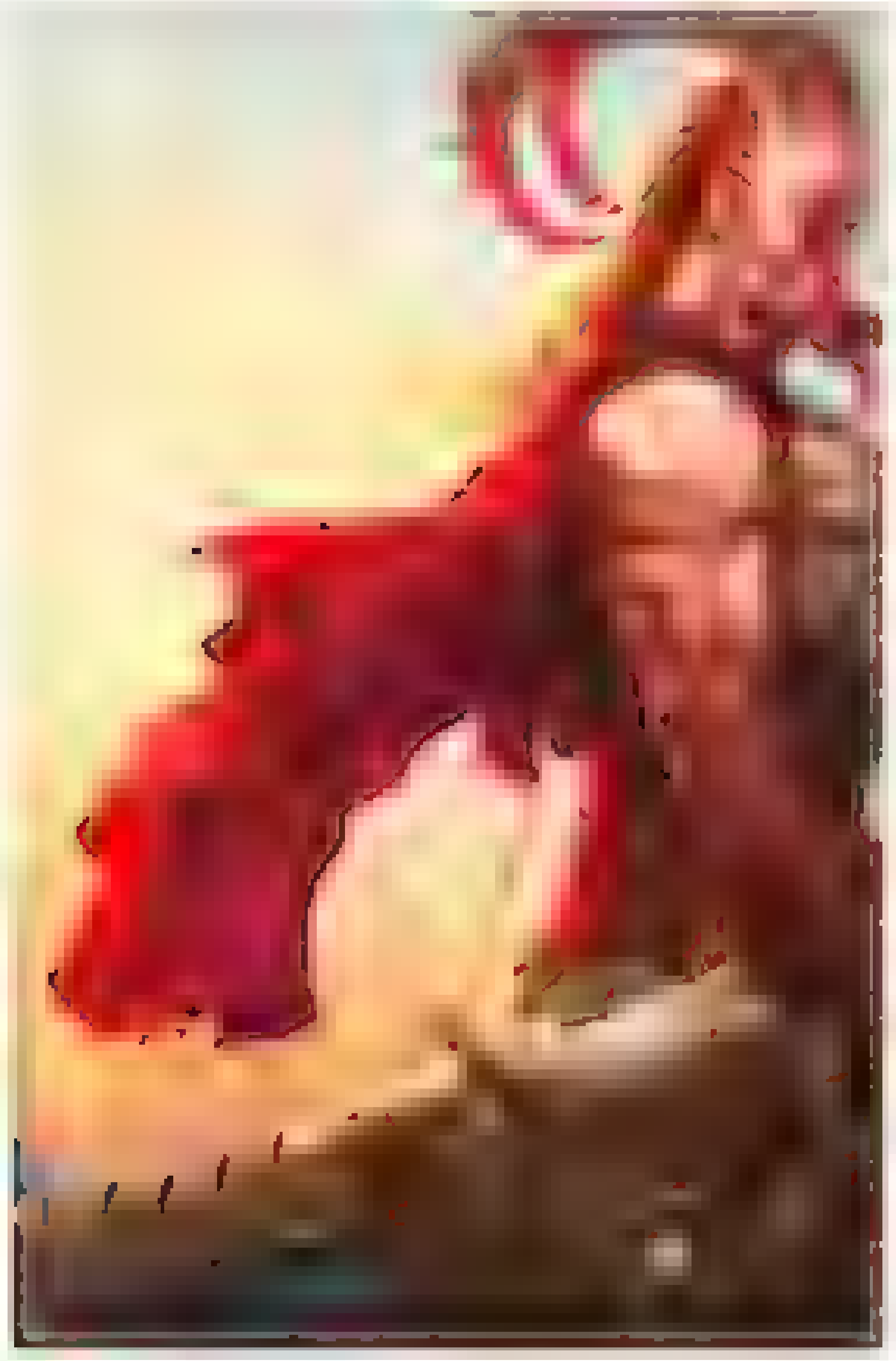
8 Detailing and changing the image

I use brushwork for painting most of the details, but sometimes I select a part of layer and change the image without affecting other layers. I do this with the Edit>Transform>Wrap and Rectangular Marquee tools. Photoshop's Wrap feature enables me to give a dynamic silhouette effect to the cape that's catching the wind



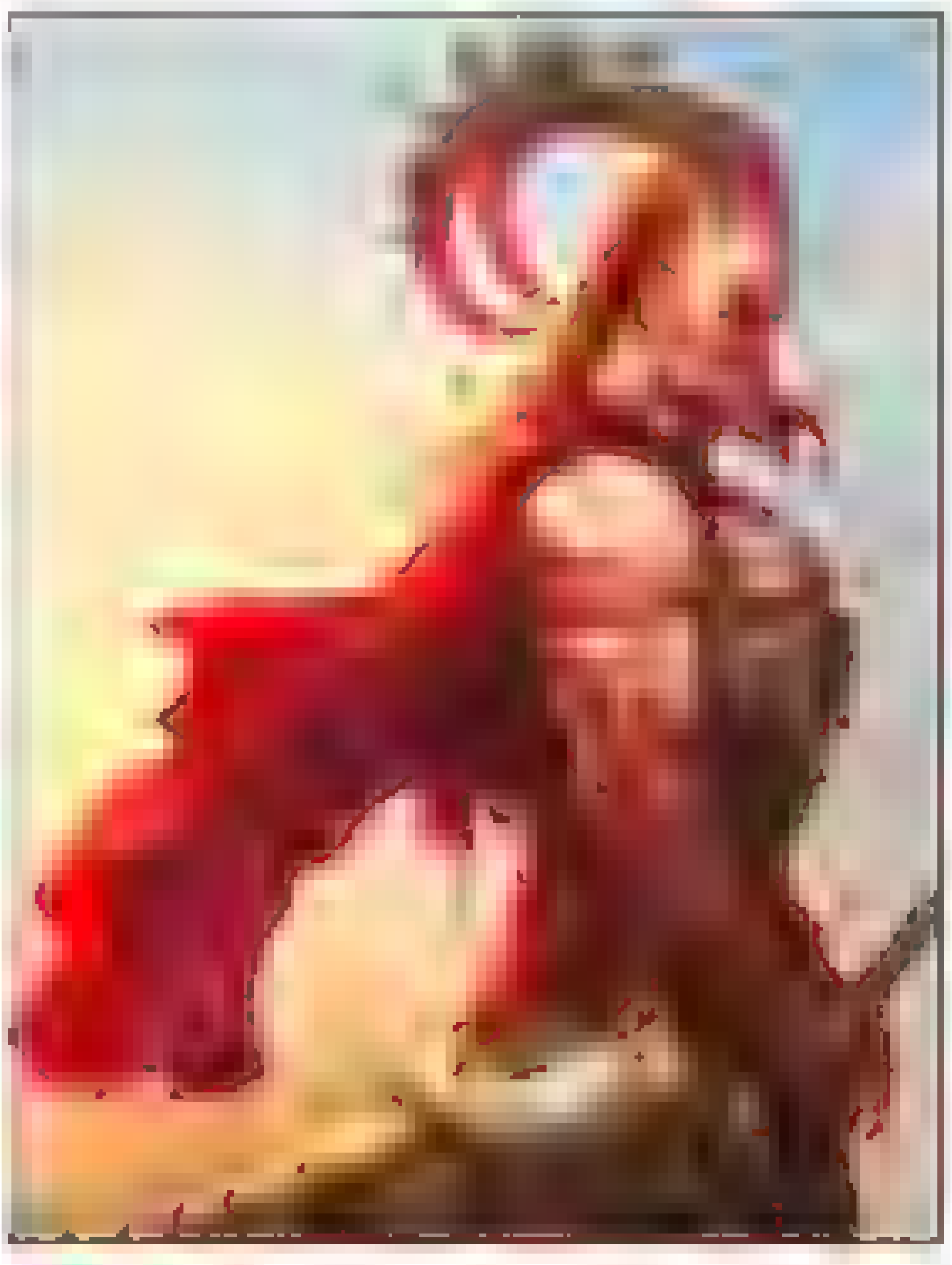
9 Tweaking aspects of the character

The Liquify tool can also be used to tackle the details in the image. If you try to change the image just by using a brush, it can take a long time and it might even take you away from your original concept. Using the Liquify option gives you a fast, flexible and effective means to editing the image. Furthermore, if you copy and paste a layer, it keeps the original image and enables you to try out a range of options. In this instance Liquify comes in very handy for editing the character's face.



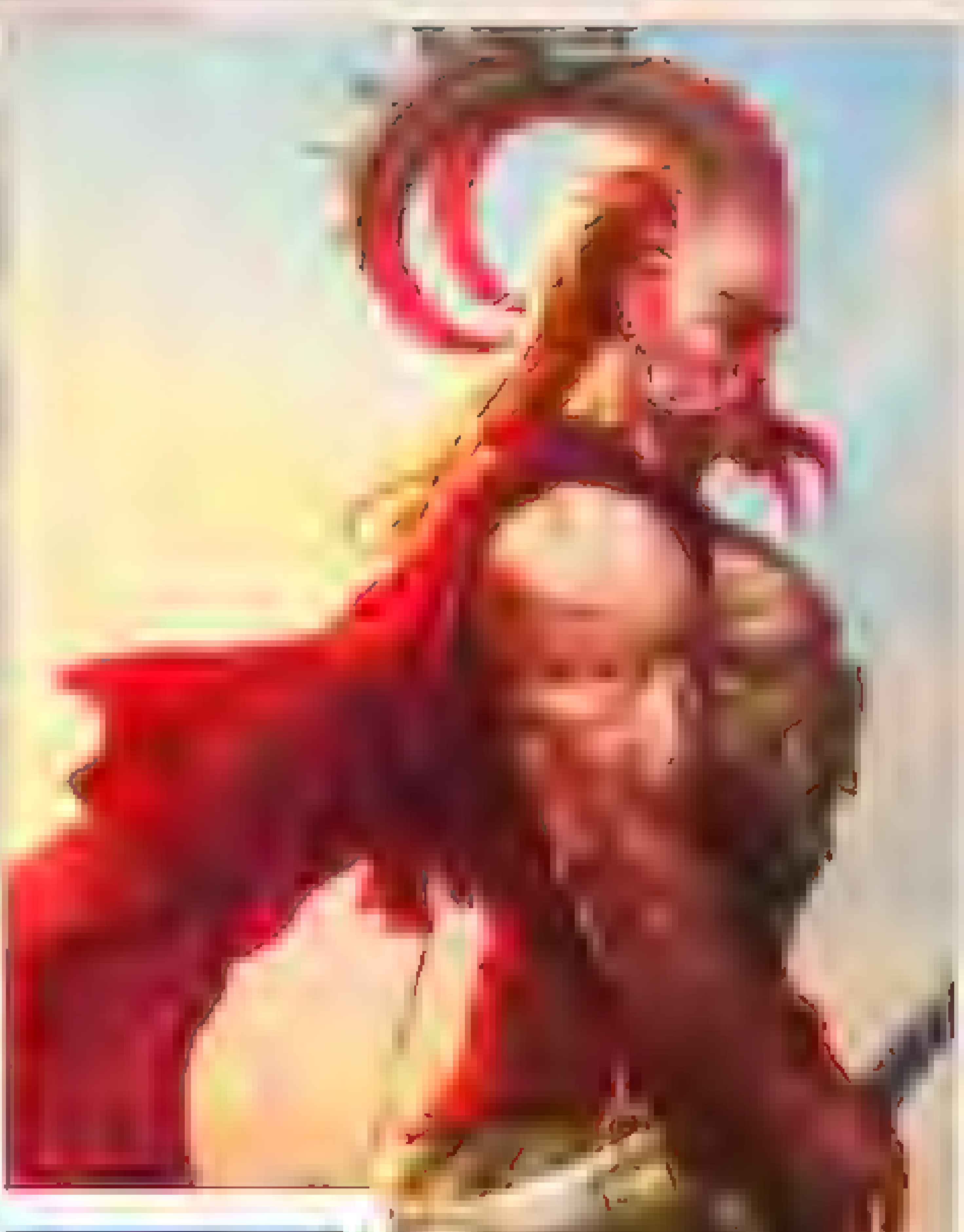
10 Colouring and lighting effect

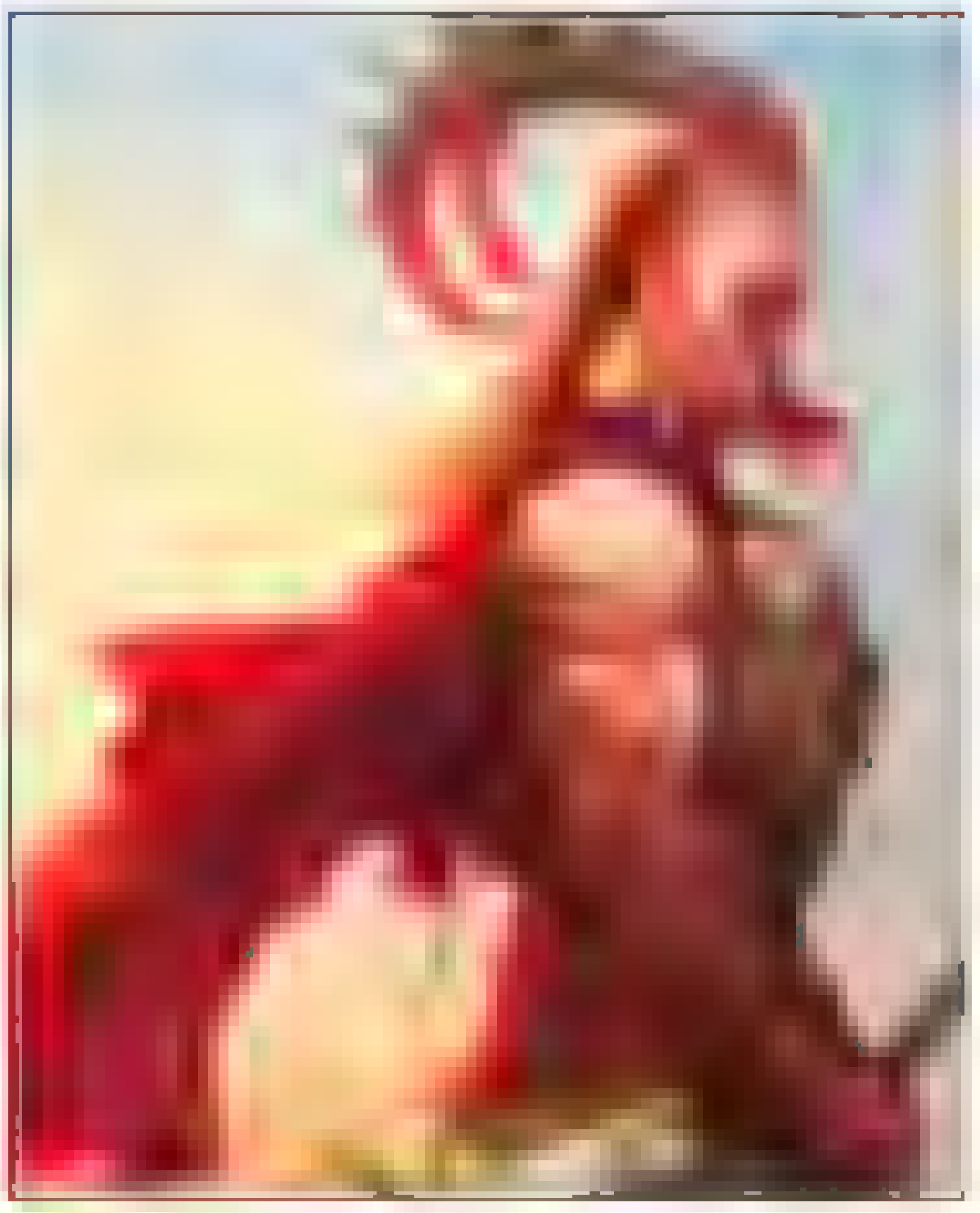
I now work on mid-sized volume areas and tackle the colouring in detail. When I'm almost done with detailing, I adjust the brightness and chroma to apply reflections on objects such as the cape. Here I give a value to the Feather option in the Elliptical Marquee Tool and use the Soft Select command. Holding Shift while using the Elliptical Marquee tool, you can multi-select areas on your canvas. When I work on objects that light can pass through, such as a bat's wing, ear or fingertip, I select the part in question and adjust the colour with Brightness/Contrast or Hue/Saturation. This produces a more dynamic light effect.



11 Finalising the lighting

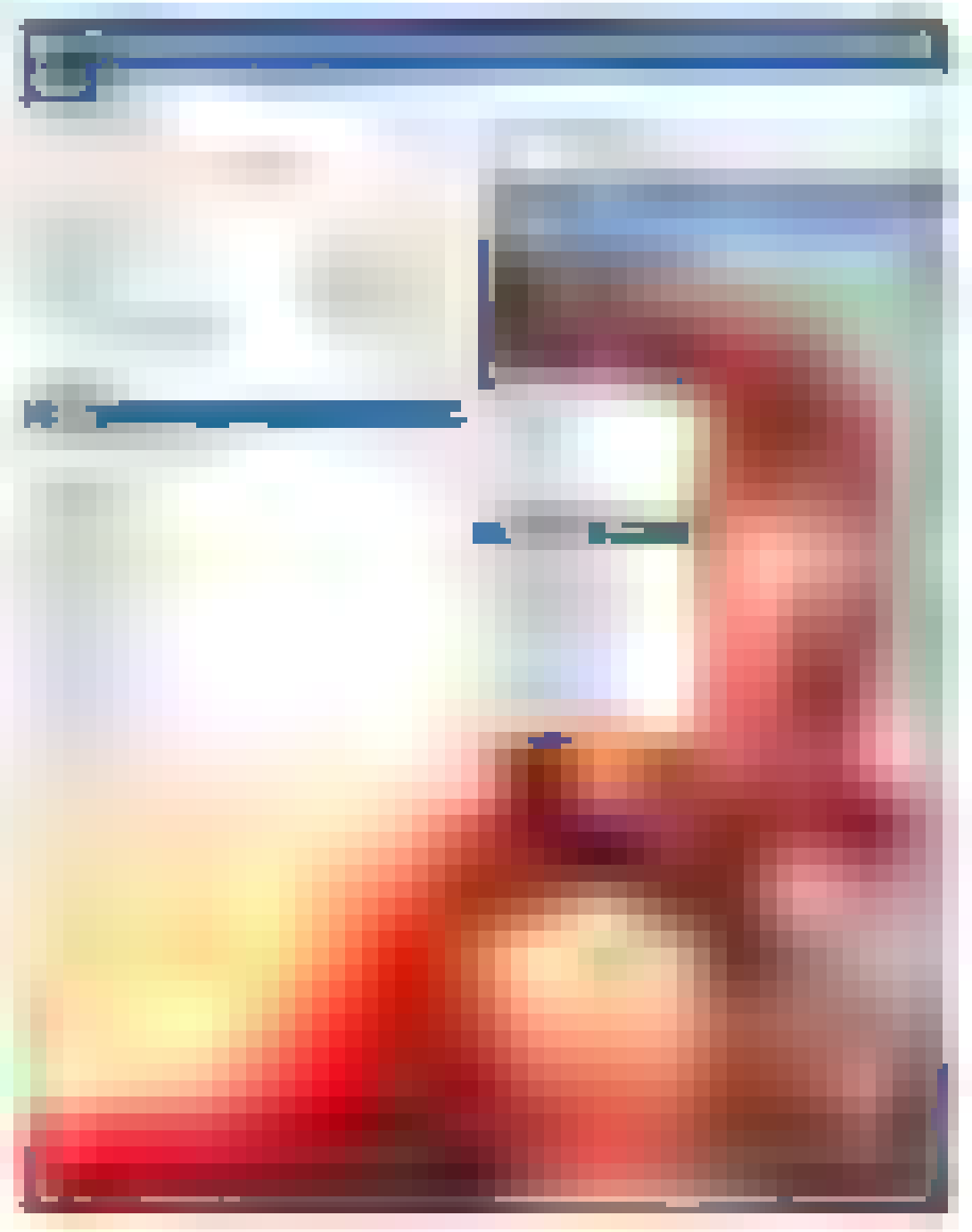
When I'm finished detailing with the mid-volume objects I start on the more detailed expression of light and shadows. For the some parts of the character's silhouette that are separated from the background, and his fingertips, beard and noise, I use a high level of chroma and brightness to create the light penetration effect, along with the shadow for each element. I use nearby colours for a reflective effect. As an example, if you're standing in the desert wearing white clothes, the sunlight will be reflected off the ground and onto the clothes, which will then be affected by the sand's colour. In turn, some of the clothing's white colour will affect the shadows. For my centaur I give a value to the Feather field in the Elliptical Marquee Tool to select a part and apply the effect.





12 Post-processing

As a final touch, I merge all the layers and adjust the atmosphere. I tweak the whole image using Brightness/Contrast, Hue/Saturation and Levels. I then copy the layers that were merged and apply Filter>Blur>Gaussian blur to adjust the opacity of layer. This generates a light bloom effect and enables you to implement scattered reflections. So not to spoil the facial expression of the centaur I look for a right value for the layer opacity and apply it to finish off the image.



WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

[illegible]

13 Final thoughts

One of the things I tried to do for this workshop was to leave a small portion of visible pen line, to give that feeling of a traditional drawing. Otherwise I think the image would look too digital. However, you need to do whatever you think will suit your image best.

DAZ Studio & Photoshop

POSE AND PAINT A BARBARIAN

Sam Kennedy uses the Genesis figure in the new DAZ Studio to produce a rip-roaring fight scene

Artist **PROFILE**

Sam Kennedy

COUNTRY: [illegible]

Former games industry artist [illegible]

[illegible]

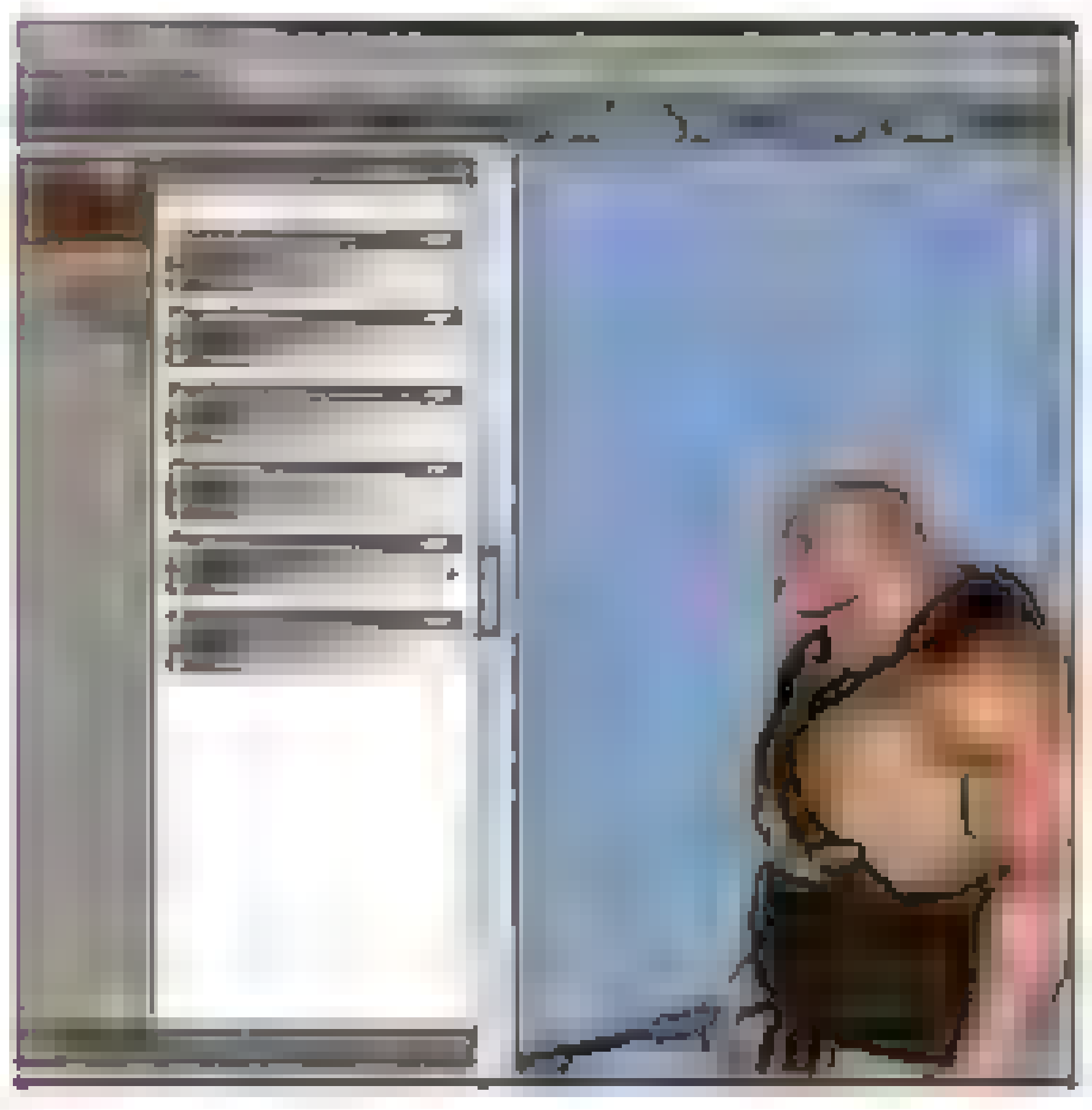
DVD Assets

[illegible]

SOFTWARE: DAZ Studio 4 Standard (full version).

Illustrating for a living is great, but I've got to be quick. How can I help a client who calls up and needs a picture with multiple figures in three days?

The answer: DAZ 3D. It's an excellent tool for generating realistic male and female figures, and now it does monsters. The recent Conan movie inspired me to do a barbarian picture with some orc-type humanoids. With DAZ's latest, DAZ Studio 4, and the new Creature Creator Morphs for Genesis, I can quickly build a small army of ne'er-do-wells for my barbarian to fight, and still create a pretty side-kick to cover his butt, too. What's perhaps even more surprising is that I could do this all using only one DAZ 3D mesh – the Genesis figure. Let me show you what I mean...



1 A versatile base

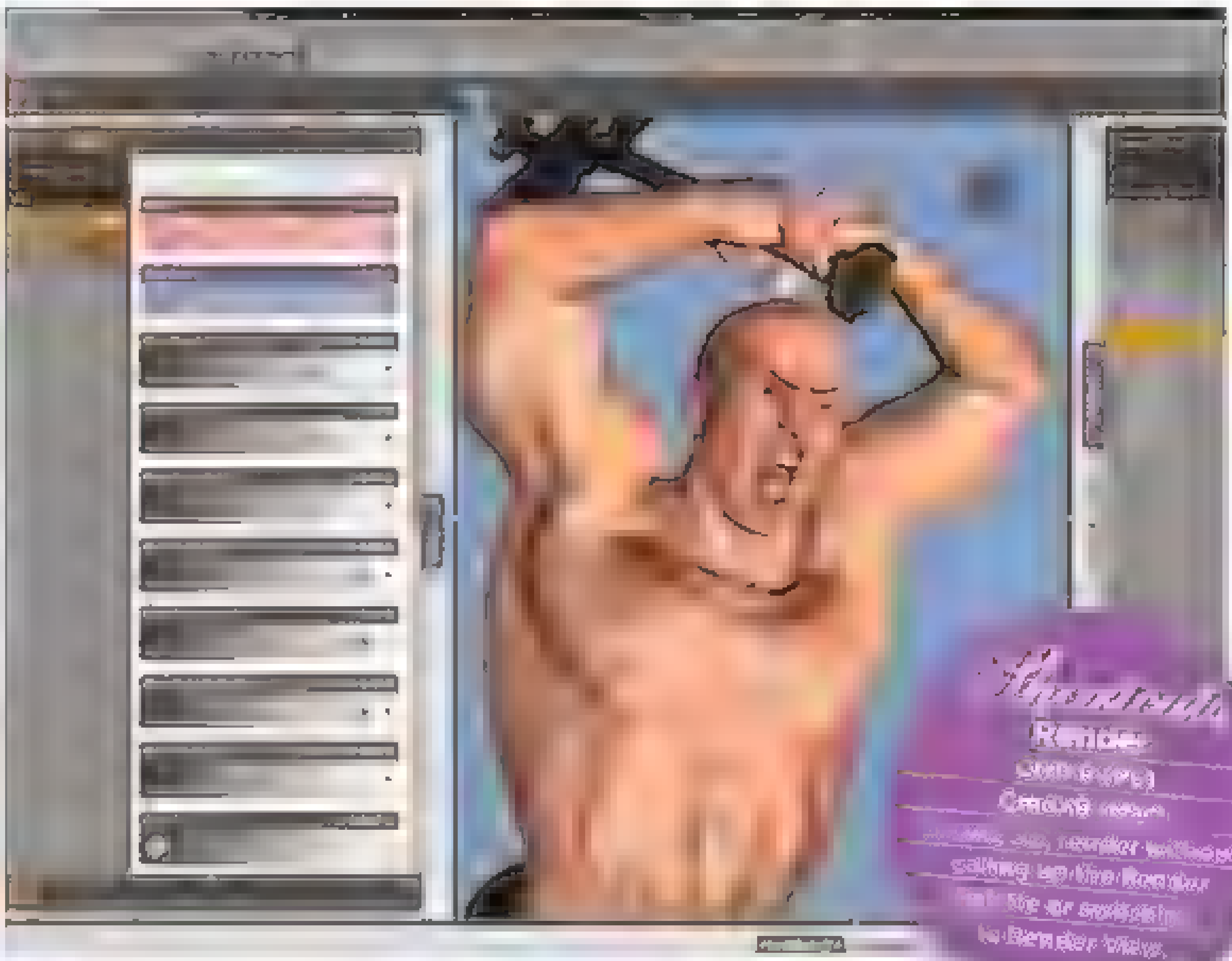
I use the Genesis figure and its morphs to create the bases for all the characters in this picture. When I open DAZ Studio 4 the grey neutral Genesis figure is automatically loaded. During the creation of this image I first use the morphs under the new Shaping tab to build the large forms of my characters. It's at this stage that I answer such questions as, "Is this character going to be male or female, a heavily muscled troll, or a light and lean warrior?" and, "How tall or short and how young or old?"

2 Muscle definition

DAZ 3D has recently added some great new morph targets to the Genesis figure. Fitness Details and Body Building Details are some of my favourite new tools, because they add a lot of muscle definition to the figure. Before the new release I had to paint this in by hand

3 Introducing emotion

After I get the general shape down I drop a texture on the character and adjust the texture in the Surfaces tab. I do this so that when I begin to give the face some emotion I can see the eyes and mouth better. With Subsurface Scattering it's easy to give skin a pink hue for my heroes and a green hue for orcs. I just change the subsurface colour from pink to green. With this method I can save time by using the same texture for all the figures of one gender, but still have some variety



Render [illegible]

[illegible] render without [illegible] the Render [illegible] to Render view.

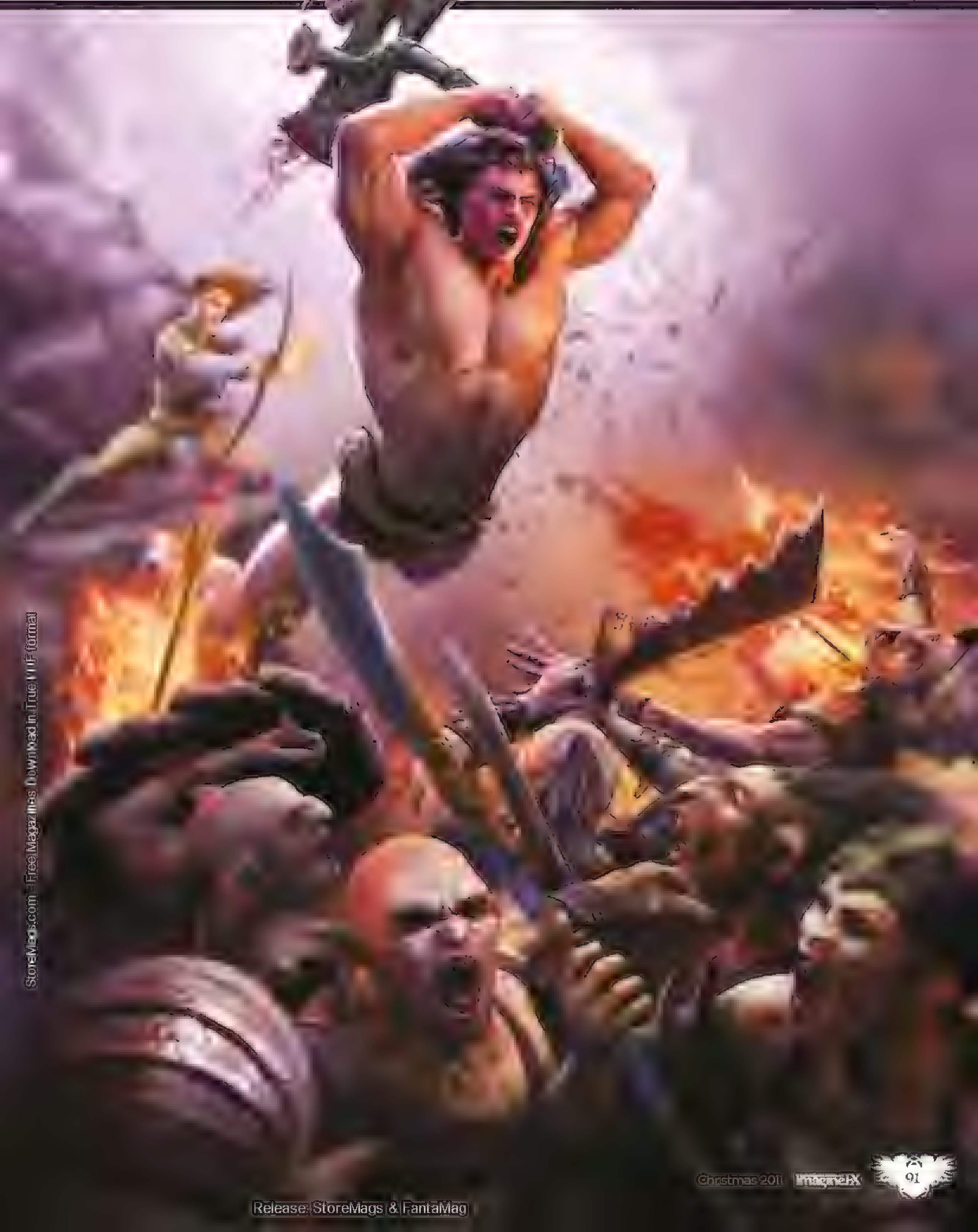
4 Greater expression

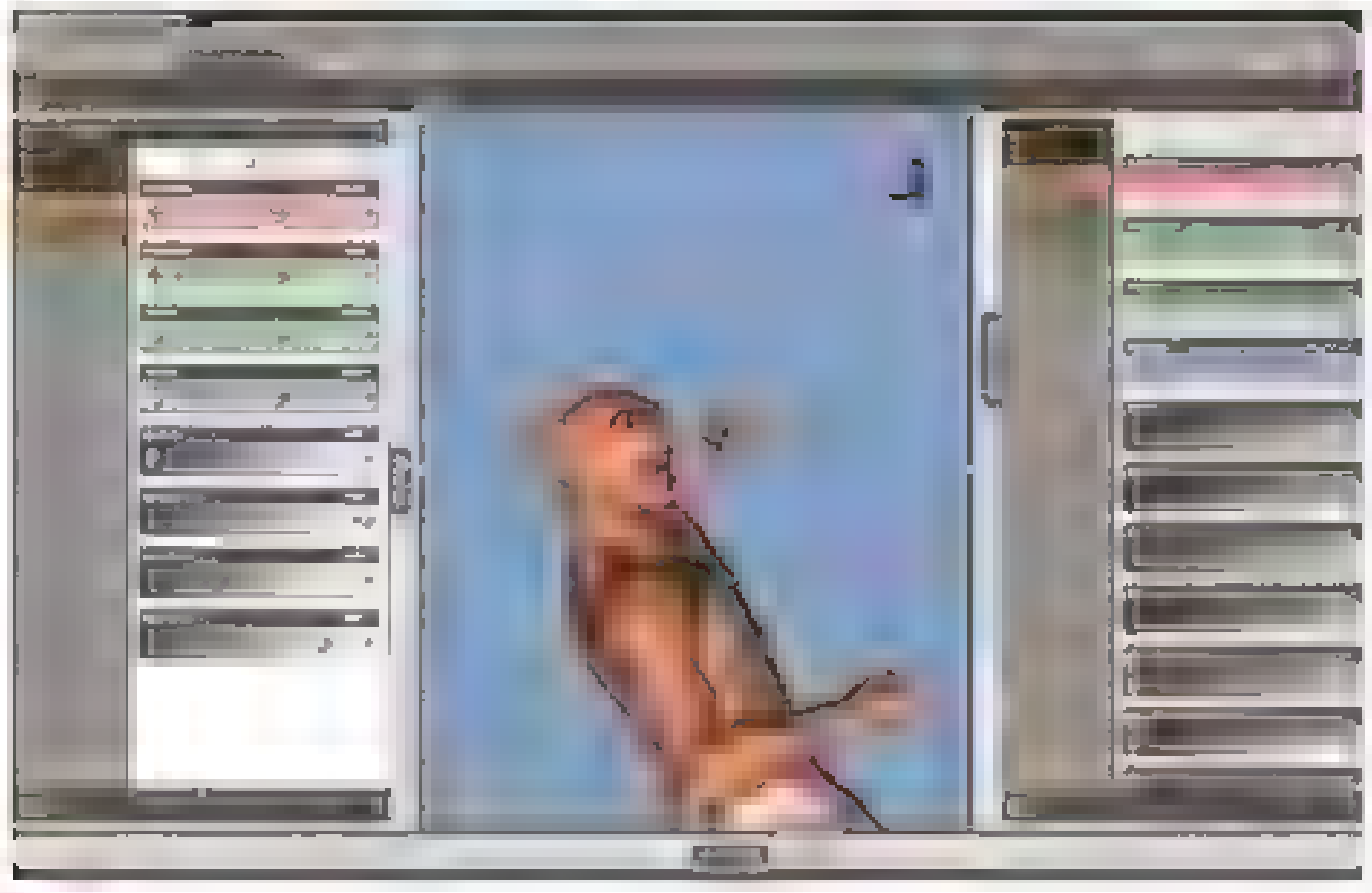
Next, I go to the new expression generator under the Pose and Animate tab. This feature existed before, but has now been expanded into a much more robust system. After selecting the head I can roll out the Expressions tab and give the beastie some attitude. Of course, all the fine-tuning morphs are still available – eyes, mouth, ears and so on – but DAZ 3D has also added some great new Creature Creator Head morphs, such as Dog, Goat and Hobgoblin to name but a few

PRO SECRETS

Tool Presets

Tool Presets enable me [illegible] Hard Brush, a Soft Textured Brush and the [illegible]



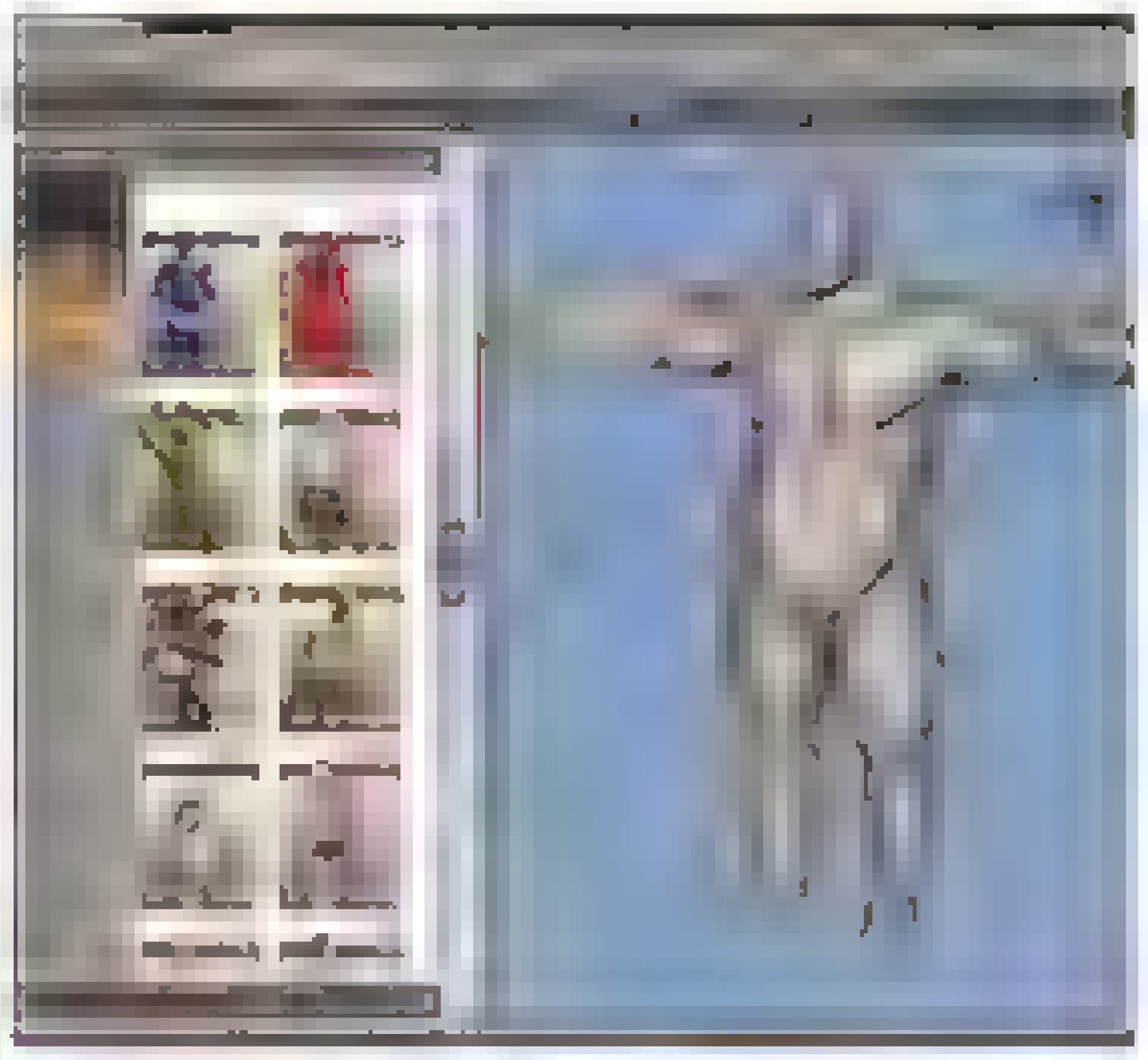


5 Lights, camera...

Now that the figure has a unique body type, facial expression, clothes, weapon and pose, I set up my lights and camera. I try to use the same lights and camera for the each character in the scene. Sometimes I cheat by adding an additional light for a character, but I strive to keep my key light the same. While working with lights and camera, I render small versions of the characters and import them into Photoshop. I place them on top of my drawing to see if I've got the pose close enough. If not, I go back to DAZ Studio and reposition an arm or whatever I need to do, to get the character to fill out the space that I want him to take up. When I'm satisfied I render out the final character around 3,000 pixels tall.

6 Render and rebuild

For this picture I stage and render each character in its own scene. After I have a finished render for each one and saved the scene with a unique name, I rename the entire scene. I zero out the morphs and the pose. This leaves me with a mapped Genesis figure with the camera and lighting from the previous shot. Then I can rebuild a new character with a unique shape and pose. If I want to swap clothes and weapons, I do this before posing.



ON THE DVD

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

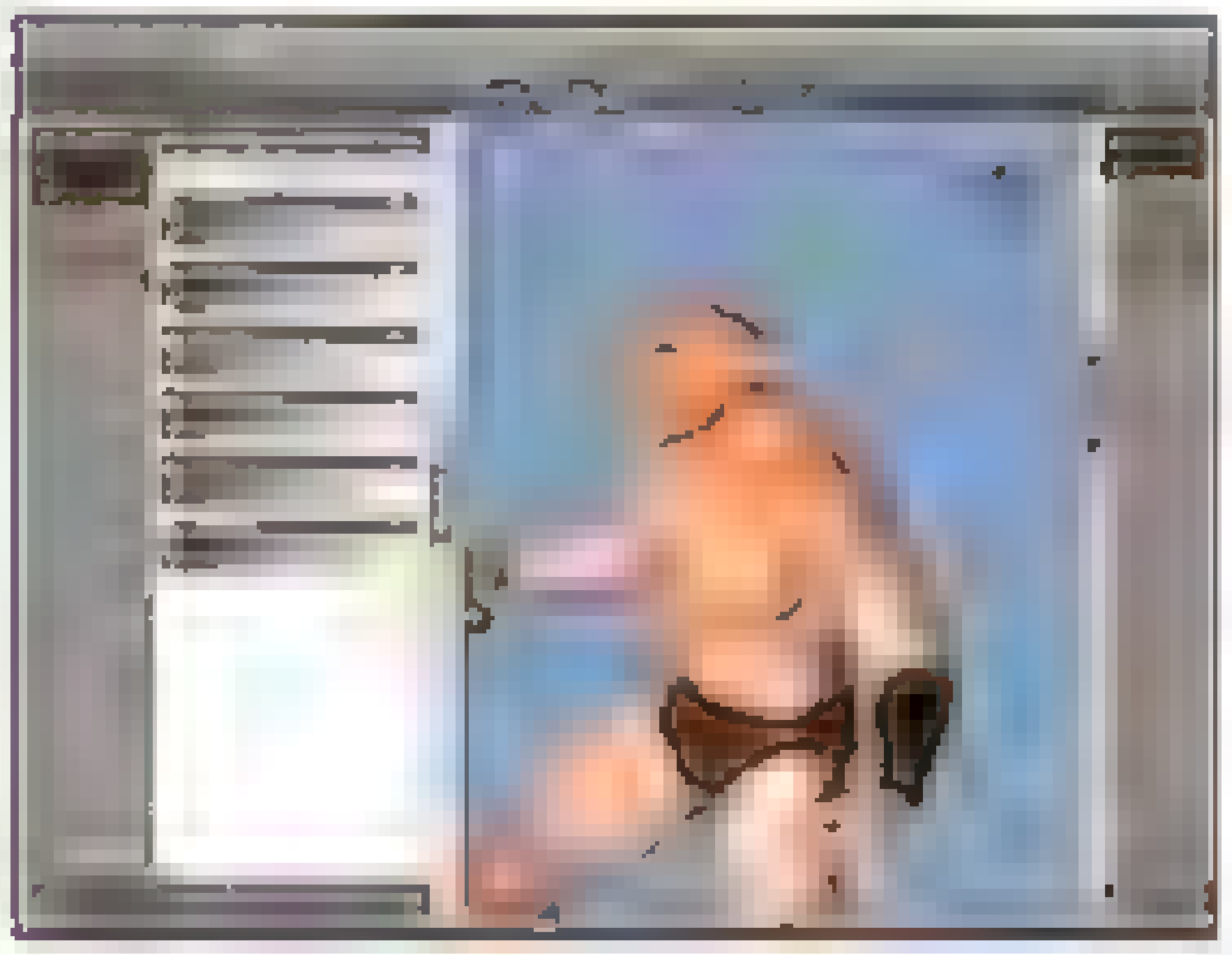
PHOTOSHOP

[illegible]

[illegible]

7 Moving body parts

After giving my figures some facial expressions, by making some final head tweaks, I pause to decide if I want to dress the leading figure. For this picture, I choose to paint most of the clothes on and then some hair.

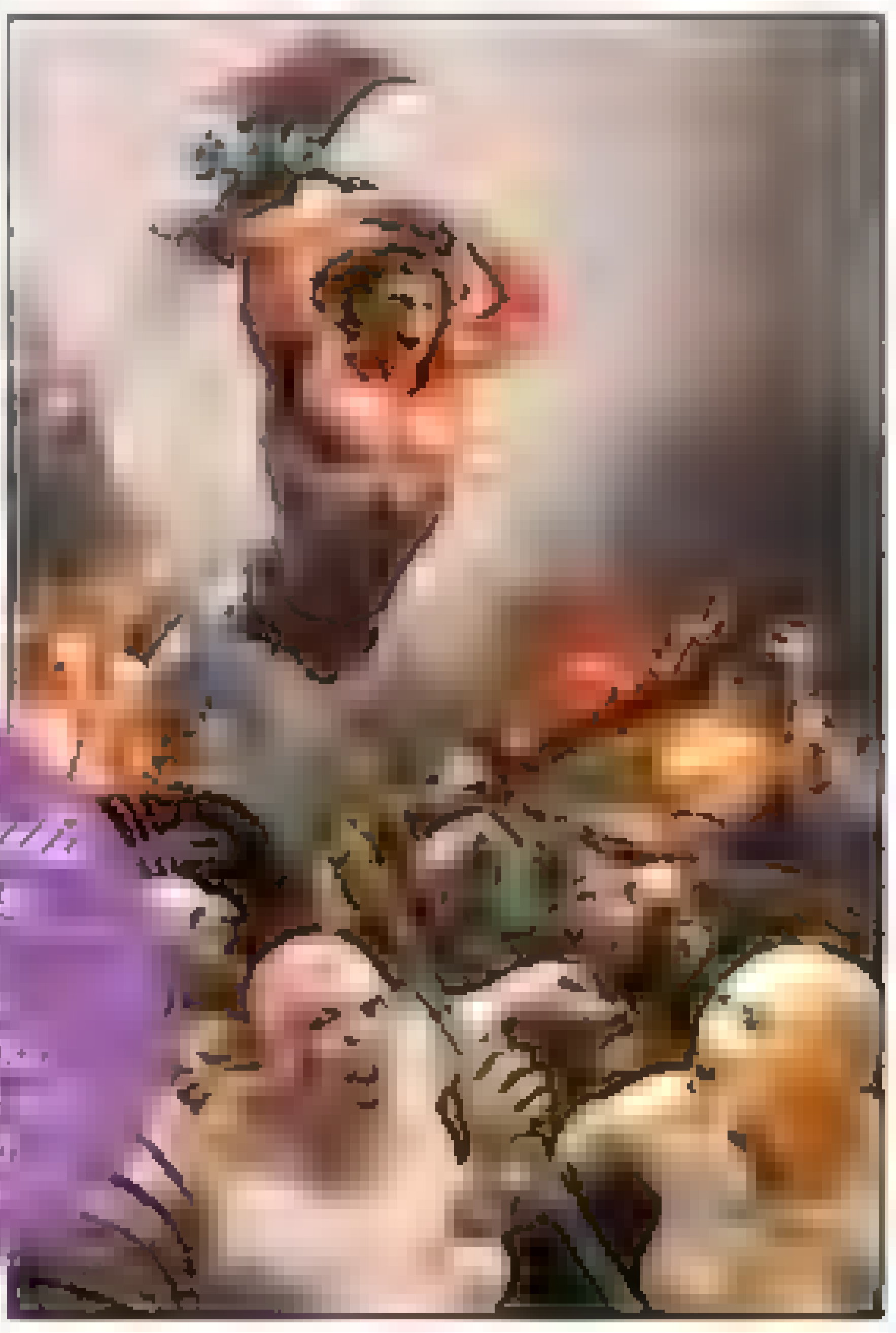


8 Clothing considerations

Once the figure is clothed and armed, I grab some pre-made poses under Pose Presets and start giving him some action moves as well. With the sliders under the new Pose Controls tab it's easy to customise his stance. I make final adjustments in the traditional way, namely grabbing the body part and rotating it.

9 Painting in Photoshop

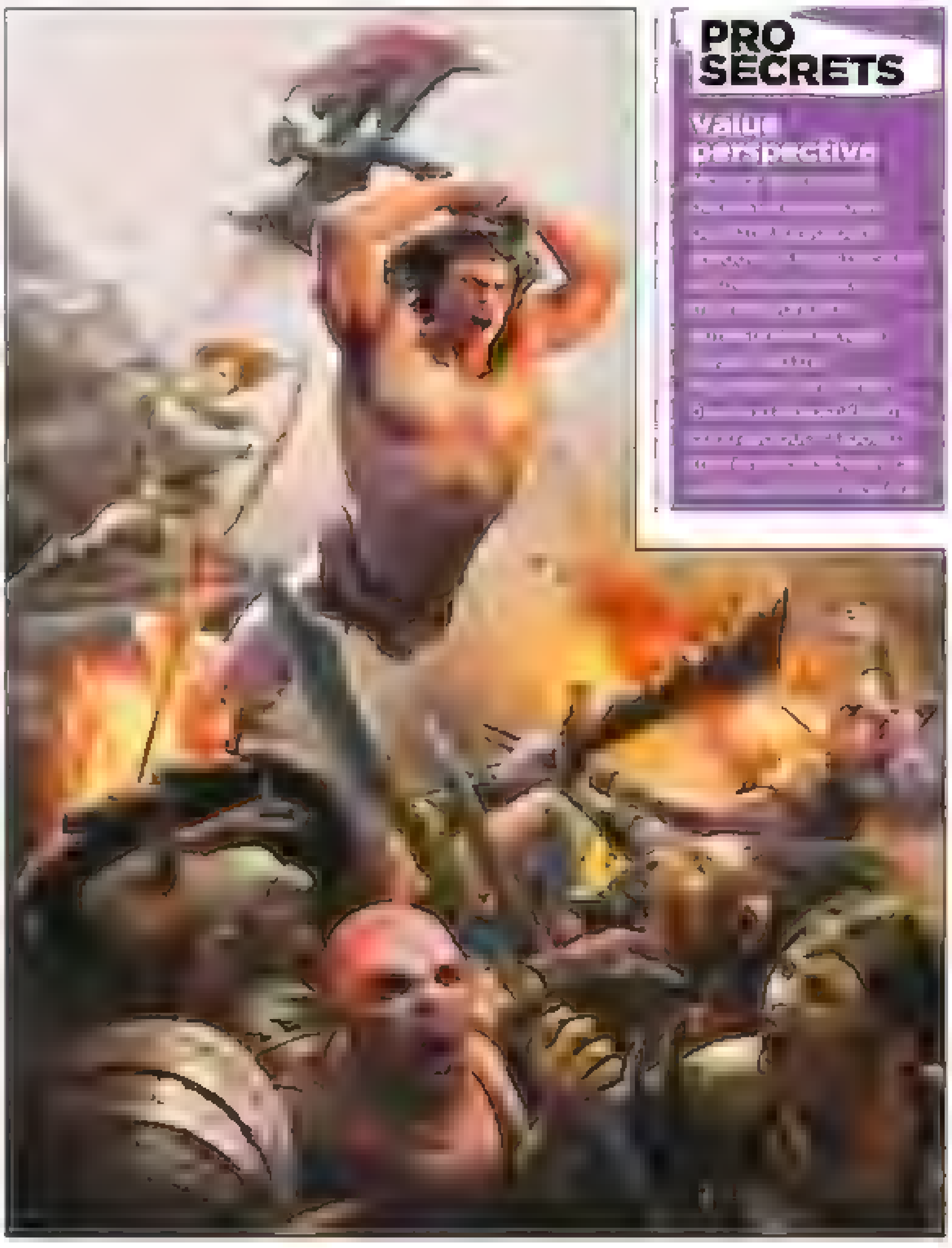
Now that I have all my reference poses, in Photoshop I do a quick paint job to try and set the overall tone. I'm careful to keep each character on its own layer, too. From here on out, I concentrate on rendering one character at a time. One thing that really helps me are Photoshop brushes. I've bought a lot of brushes from DAZ 3D's site and have also made some of my own.



[illegible]

10 Apply some effects

Once each element is rendered, I then apply some post effects. To do this, I simply blur the edges of the painting. At the last minute, though, I decide I want to change the colour of the background. Having done so, the temperature of the background tone now contrasts nicely with the warm colour in front. And I'm done.



PRO SECRETS

Value perspective

[illegible]

Painter

NAVIGATION AND WORKFLOW HINTS

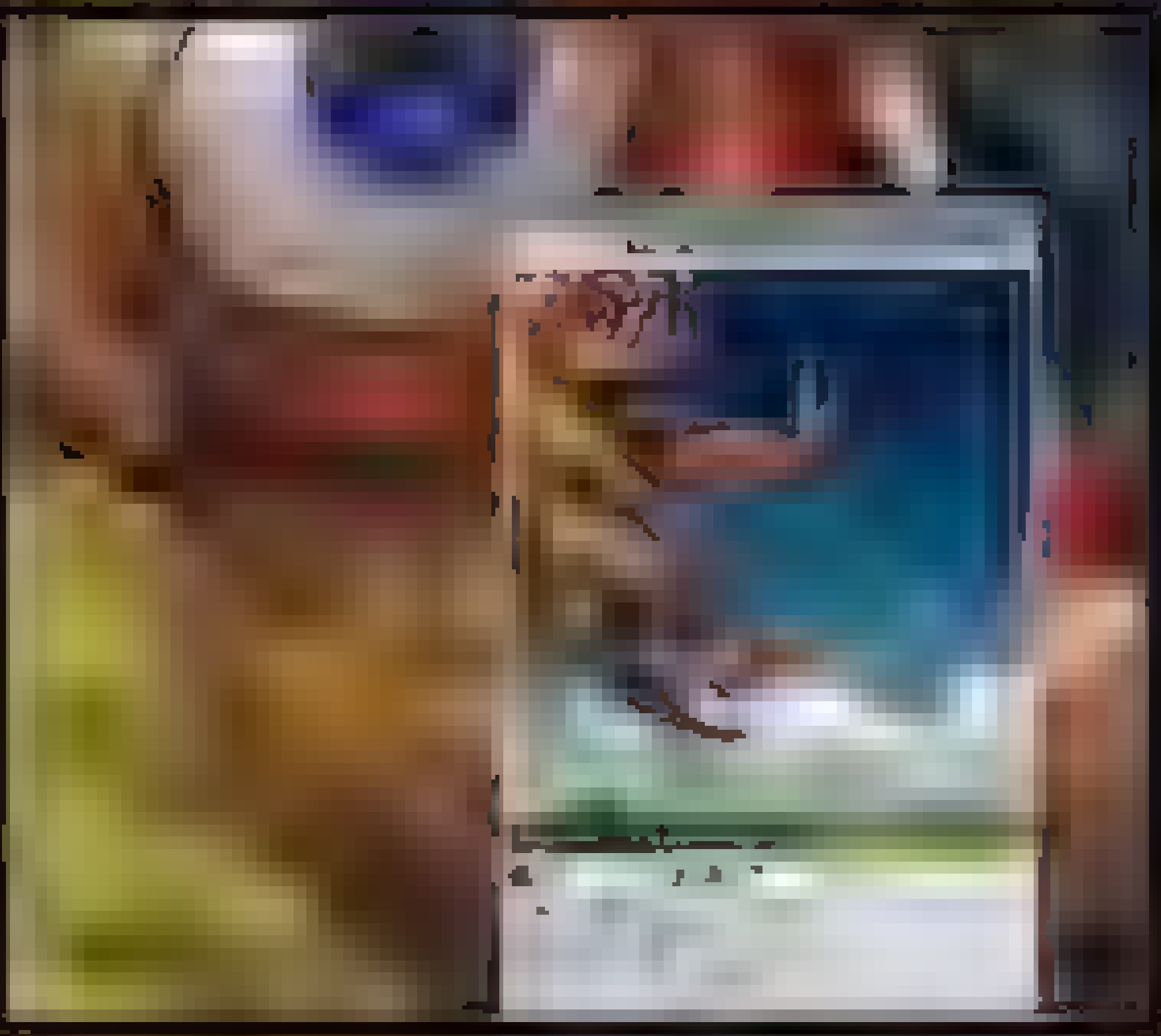
Use Painter 12's new navigation tools to enhance your workflow and improve your workspace, with the help of **Simon Dominic**

Whatever your artistic style, you'll likely make extensive use of Painter 12's navigation and colour selection techniques. Of course, functions such as panning, zooming and colour choice are common across all painting packages, but when you're using them hundreds of times per session it's their implementation and ease of use that makes all the difference.

In this article I'll look at how the new Navigator panel consolidates several workflow functions into one intuitive interface, and how the Temporal Colors palette can be used as a speedy alternative to the Color Wheel. Don't forget that Painter also offers customisable keys; press options for these functions, configured through Edit>Preferences>Customize Keys.

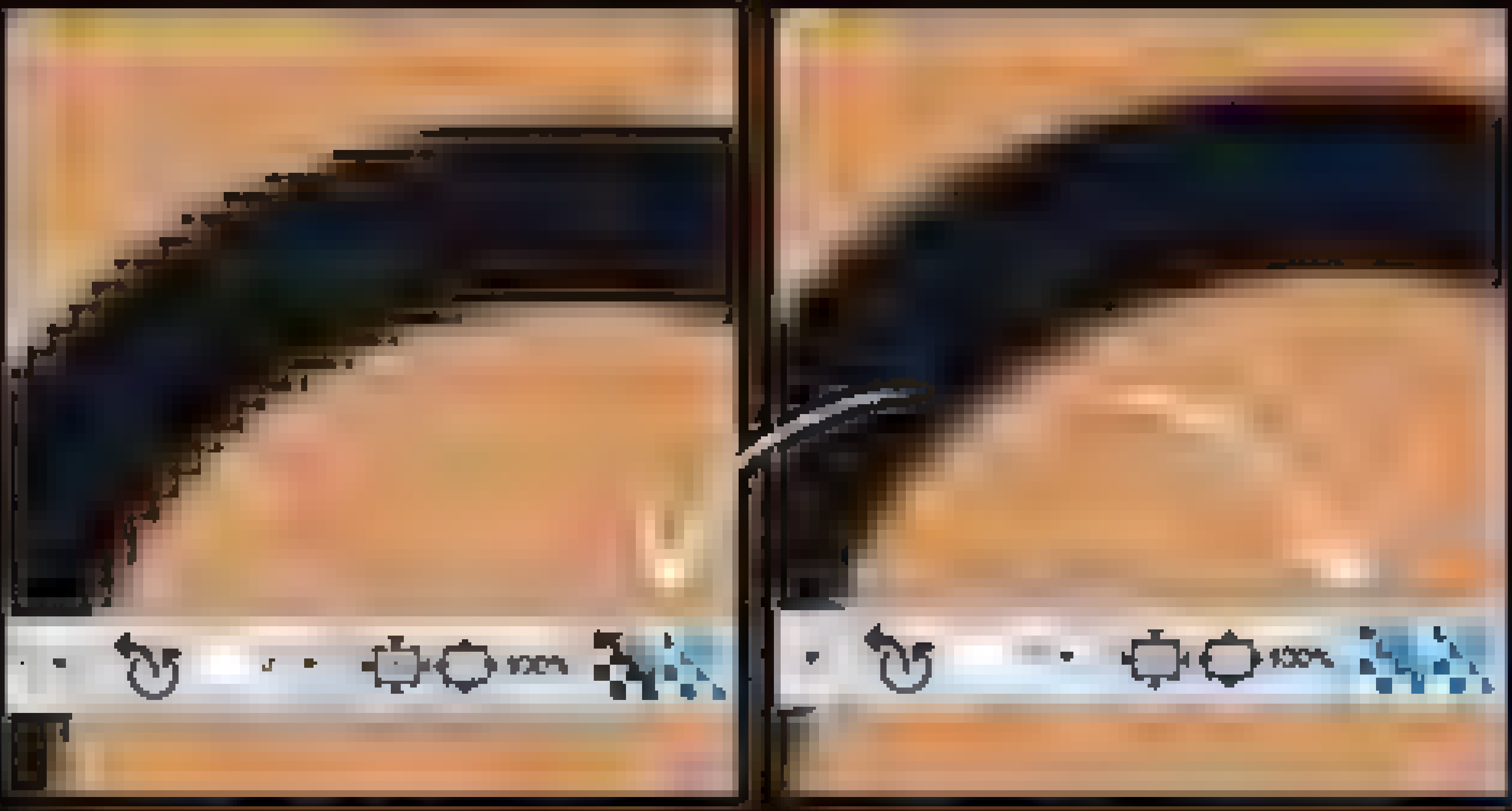
1 Navigating the Painter canvas

Display the Navigator panel using Window>Navigator and then load a large image. The red rectangle on the Navigator highlights the area being displayed. Drag the rectangle or click outside it to shift focus. Resize the preview image by dragging the edges or bottom right-hand corner of the panel itself. Experiment with the zoom and rotate controls below the preview image.



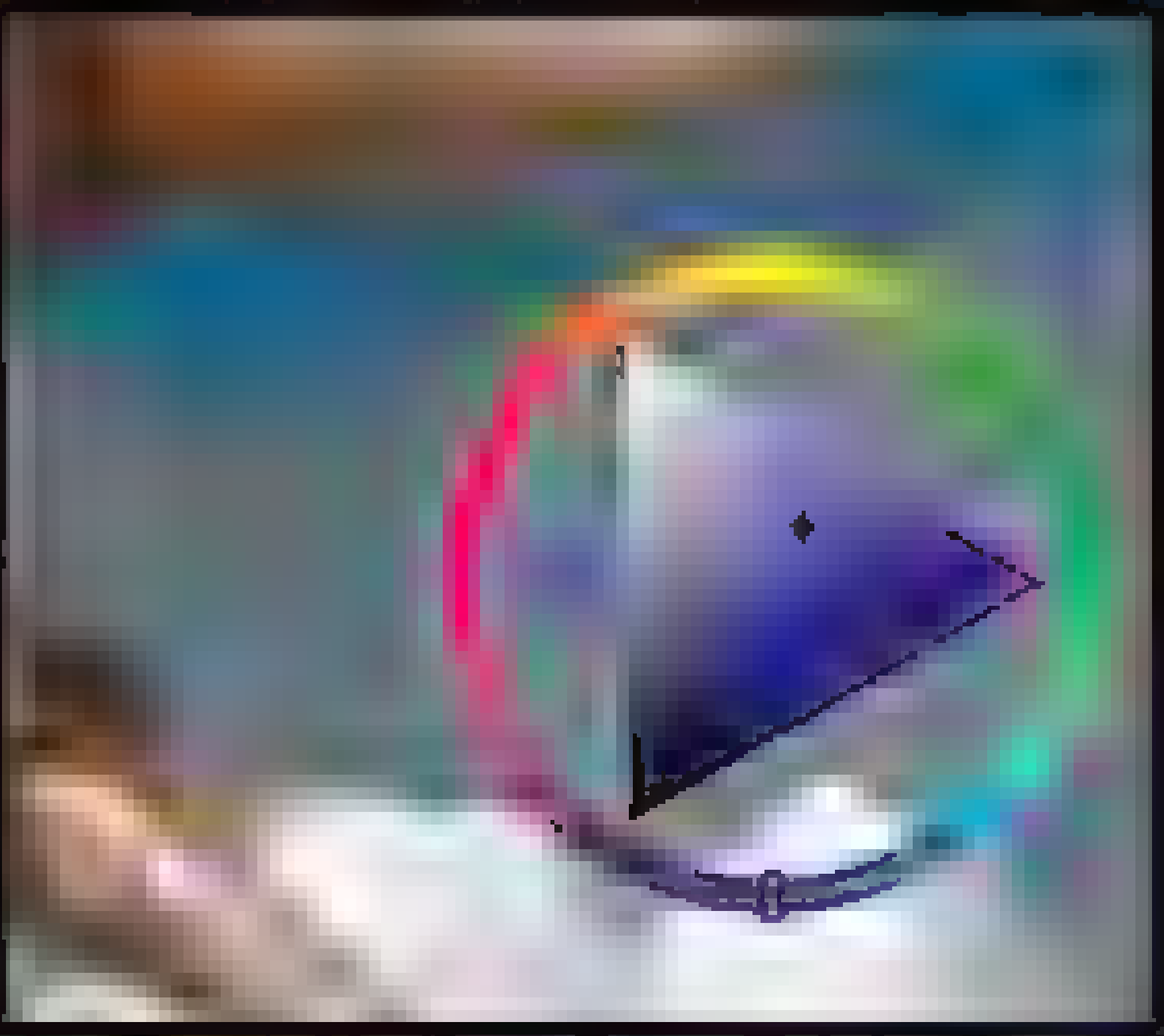
2 Zoom quality and performance

Click the Magnifier tool on the Toolbar. To the right of the Property bar appear two new icons. Click Area Averaging (right) to speed up drawing when zoomed out. Click High Quality Display (left) to soften pixels when zoomed in, which gives an indication of how your image might look when printed. Neither of these affect your actual image, only how you view it.



3 Temporal Colors Palette

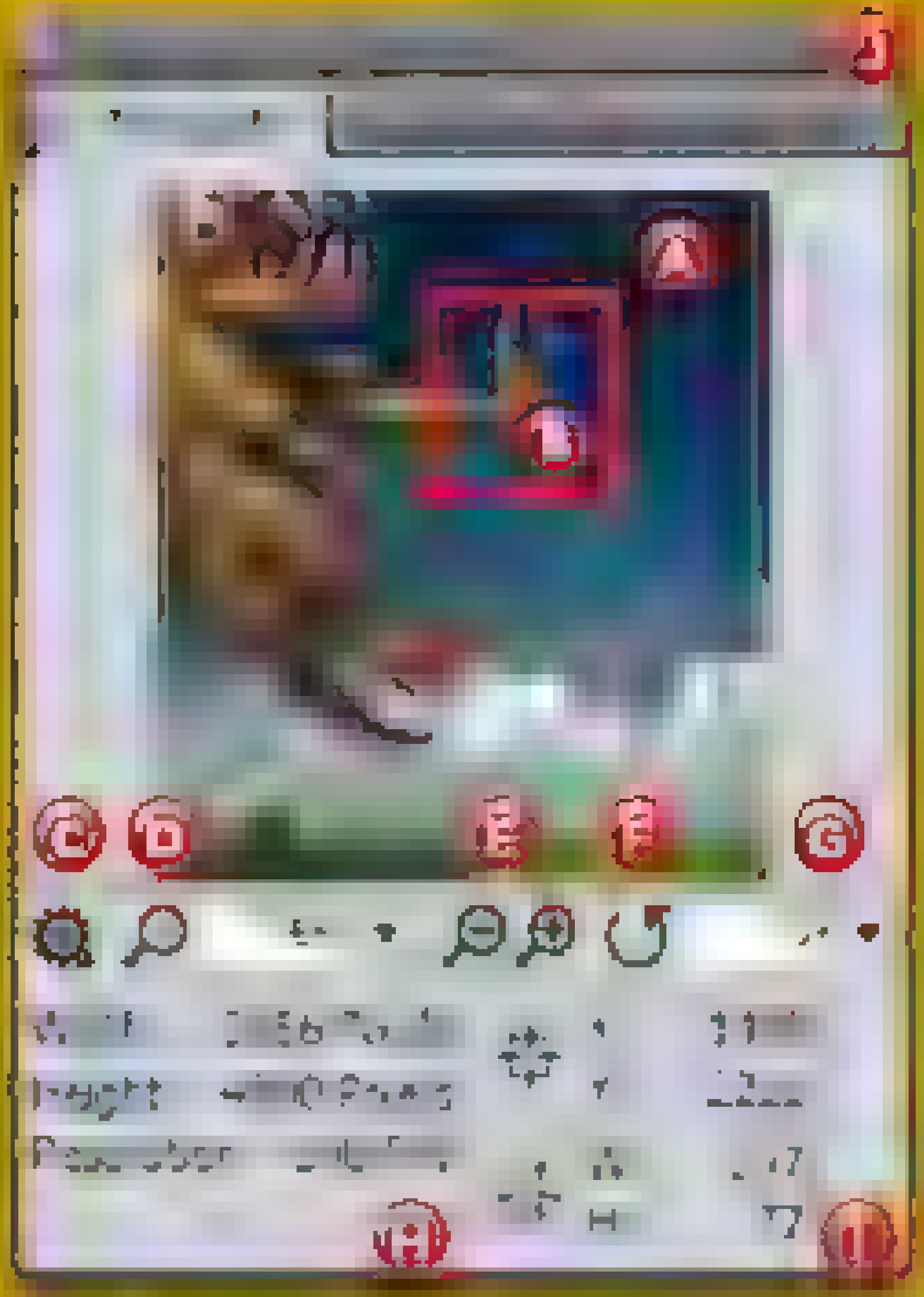
Display the Temporal Colors palette using Ctrl+Alt+1 (Cmd+Opt+1 on the Mac), or assign it a key using Customize Keys. Resize the palette by dragging on the very edge of the circle and move it by dragging the inner transparent area. Select Saturation and Value from the inner triangle and Hue from the outer ring. Press the same key(s) to make the palette disappear, or just resume painting.



Artist **PROFILE**

[illegible] fantasy, sci-fi and horror. He works primarily on game art, book covers, private commissions, cards and magazines www.painterly.co.uk

VIEW YOUR ARTWORK



A. Preview image
Change size by dragging the edges/corner of the Navigator panel itself

B. Navigator frame
The portion of the image currently in view

C. Navigator options
Related menu options including drawing modes, colour management and grid toggle

D. Reset zoom
Set zoom to 100 per cent

E. Zoom controls
Type a value into the Zoom Canvas box or click the drop-down and drag. Use Zoom In and Zoom Out to zoom in stages

F. Reset rotation
Sets canvas rotation to 0 degrees

G. Rotate canvas
Type in a rotation value or click and drag the drop-down

H. Canvas info
Displays image width and height in pixels plus PPI (Pixels Per Inch) for printing

I. Cursor and selection info
Top section displays cursor position when in a selection mode, lower section displays size of selected area

J. Navigator menu
Toggle visibility of the Navigator Frame

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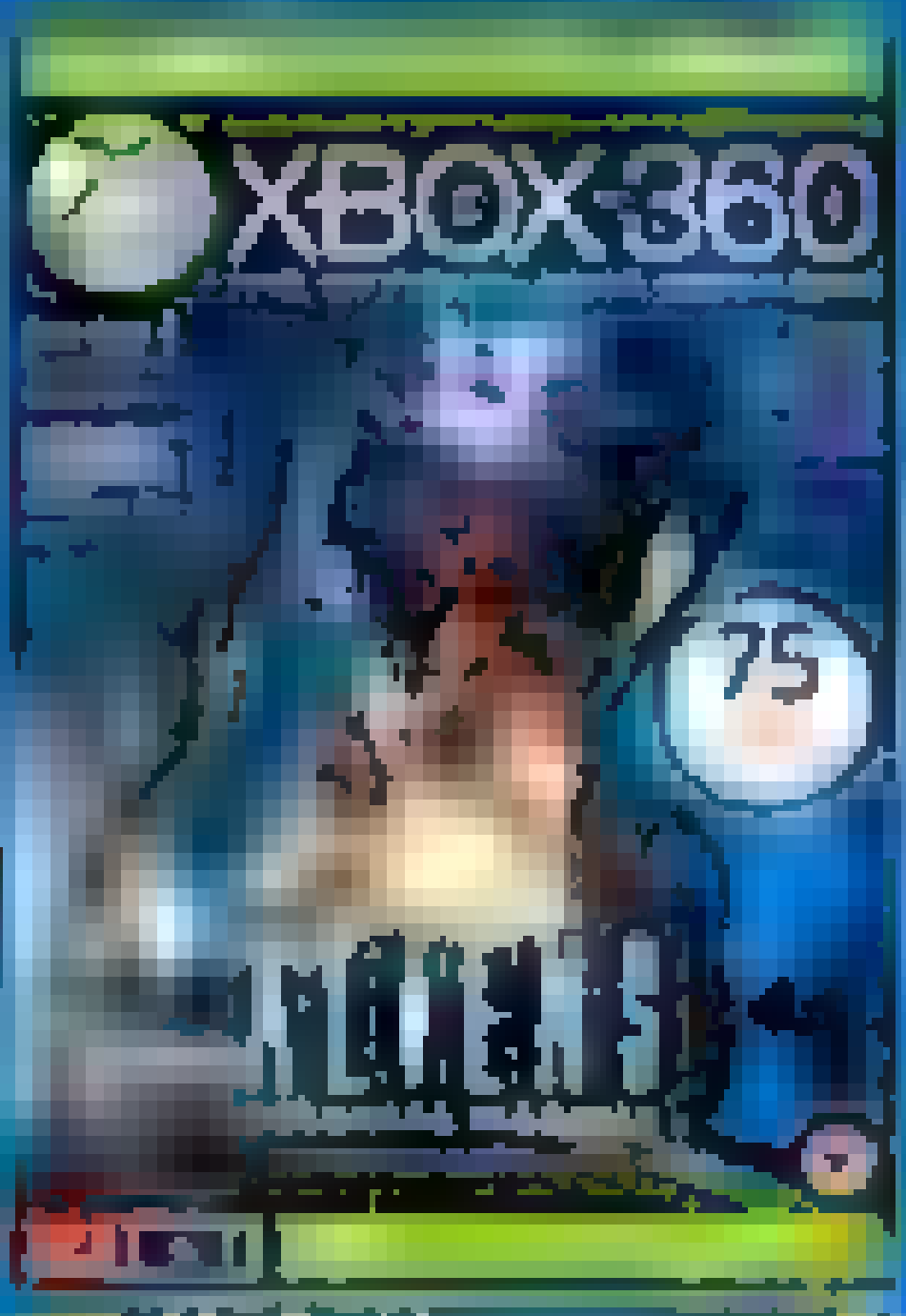

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The masters exposed

Adam Hughes, Aly Fell and others celebrate the influence of Alphonse Mucha

Also

[illegible]

How to incorporate Arthur Rackham's style into your digital process.

[illegible]

Tap into the Art Nouveau scene and learn how to use nature as a reference tool.

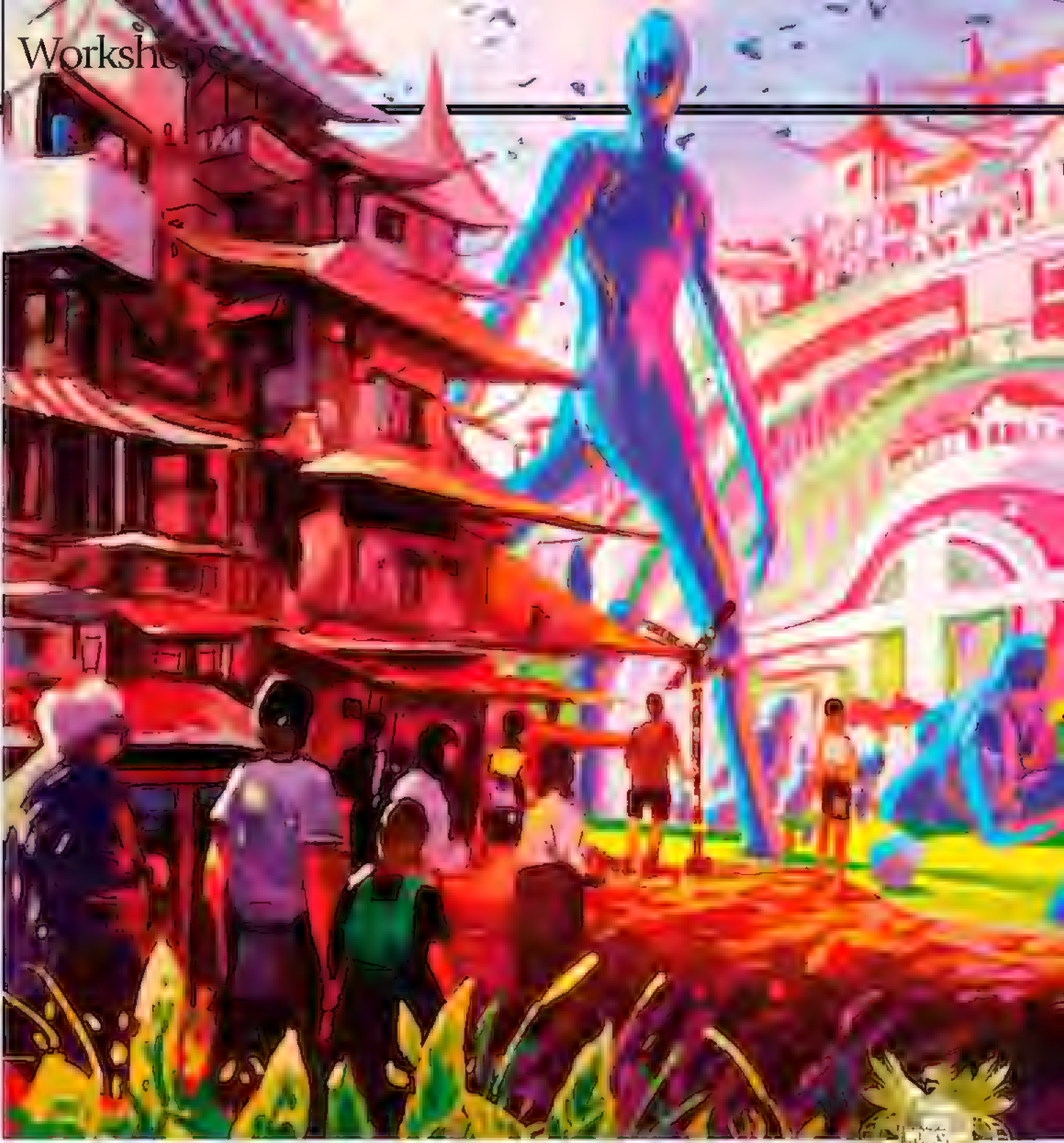
[illegible]

Follow Marta Dahlig's advice on applying Mucha's style to your portraits.

Art Basics

The secret to perfect digital colour blending, with Don Seegmiller.

ISSUE 78 ON SALE *9 December 2011*



Artist
PROFILE

Yap Kun Rong
COUNTRY: Tokyo

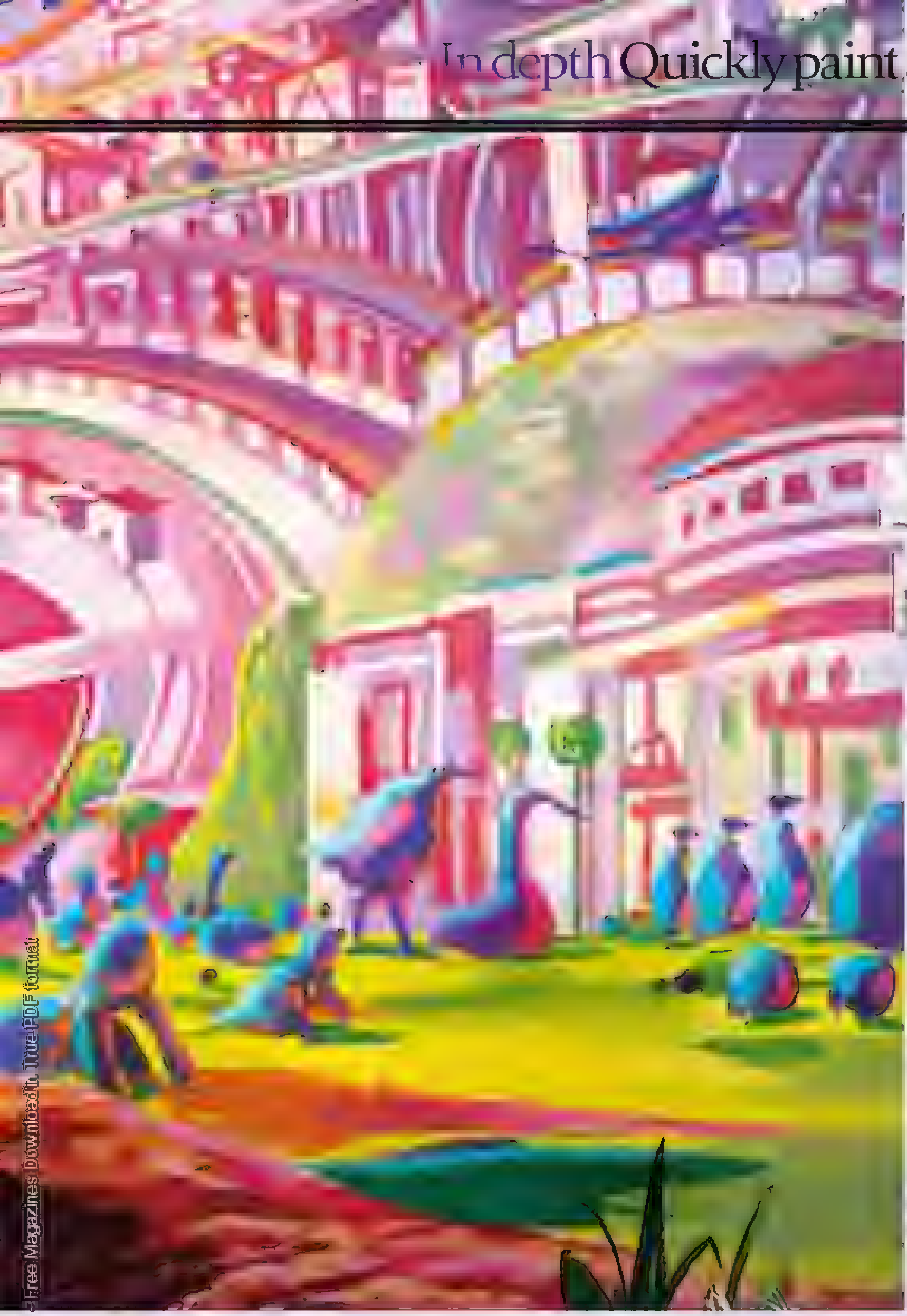
Yap works as an illustrator and concept artist
bit.ly/izujr6

DVD Assets
The files you need are on your DVD in the Yap Kun Rong folder in Workshops

Photoshop

QUICKLY PAINT A VIBRANT SCENE

Yap Kun Rong uses perspective techniques and reoccurring shapes and forms to create a stylised, colourful environment



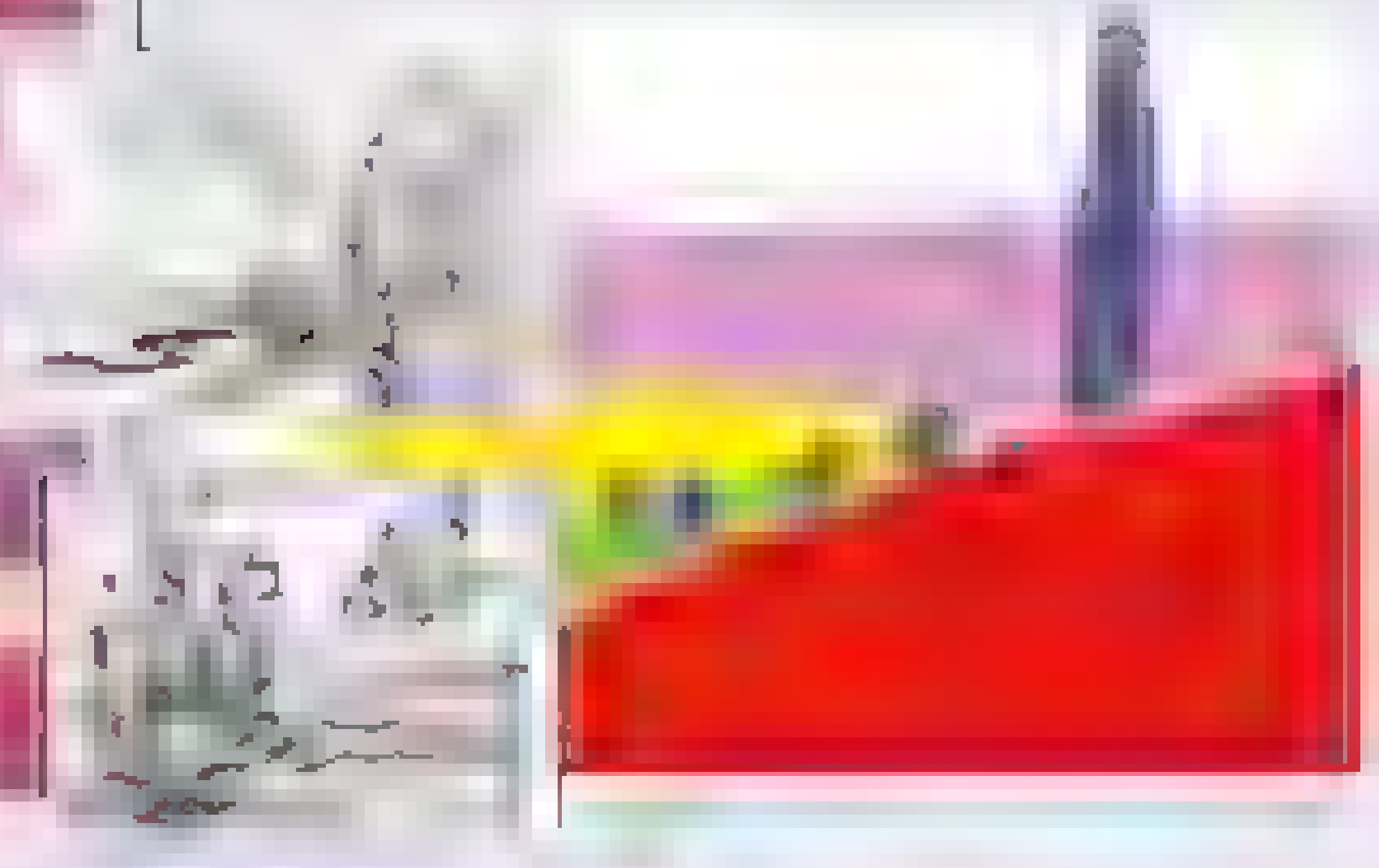
As a concept artist and illustrator, I usually go through a few key stages when creating a piece of work. A knowledge of perspective and forms is crucial to make any fantasy illustration illusion work. With an understanding of perspective, many things become possible. Perspective can be warped to create exaggerated scenes, heightening the amount of interest in the work.

Over time I've developed a sense of colour and in this workshop I'll try my best to explain the thinking behind my use of colours. You'll soon notice that the colour palette I've used in this image is a fantastical, stylised one. Many people have asked me how I handle so many colours, so here I'll reveal my process of multiplying colours from one basic shade. By breaking down my steps of colour management, I'll show you how a complicated-looking image can be achieved with control.

I believe that if you understand enough of realistic art techniques, stylisation can become possible through the exaggeration of those techniques.

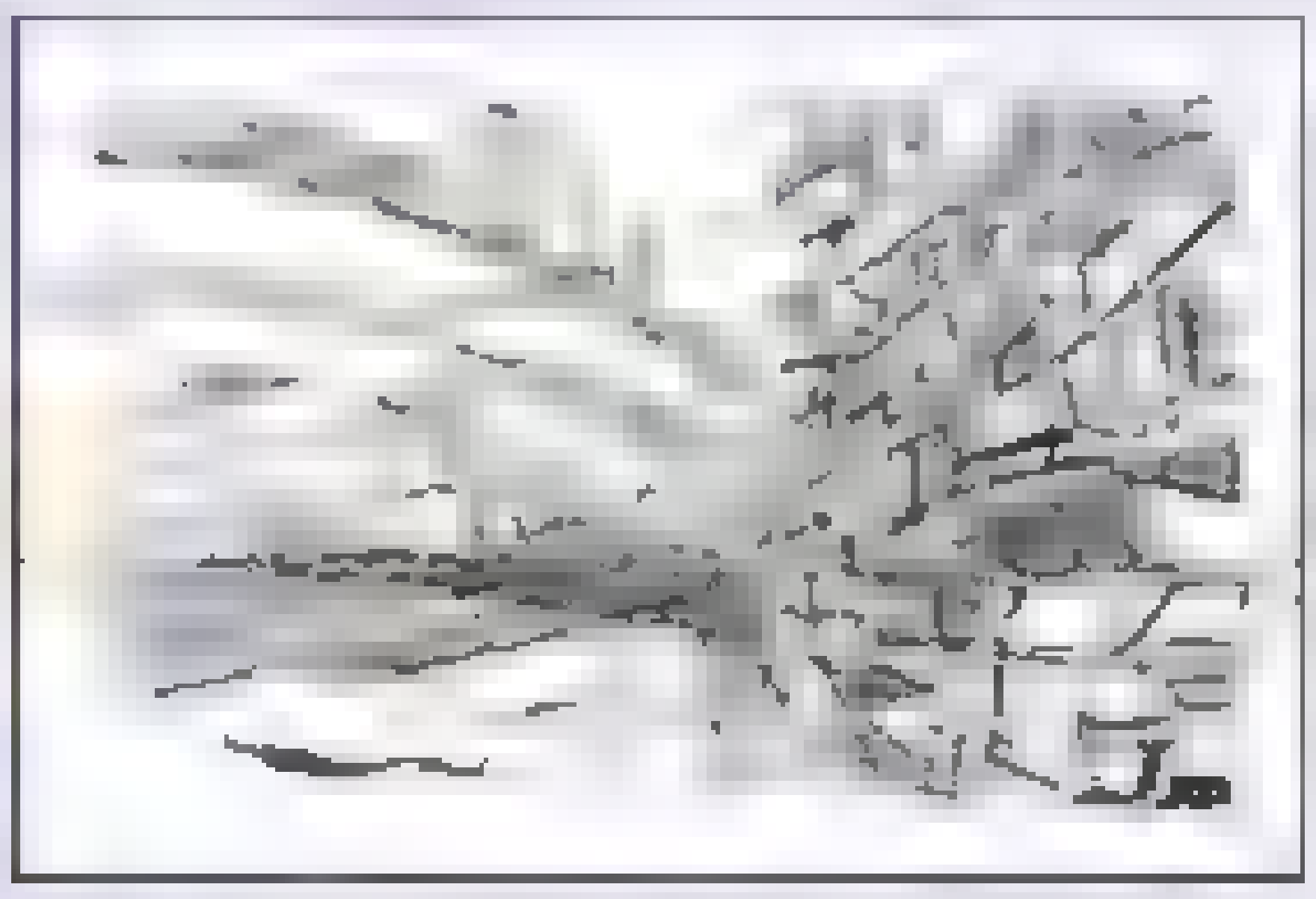
① Thumbnail sketches

I work on perspective by defining the horizon line and then tackle the basic shapes. I decide on a conventional composition, then juxtapose the fore-, mid- and background to create the illusion of depth. I want to give the piece a dreamy, sunbathed look, hence my choice of warm colours. Once I've picked a few colours, I can expand on them in areas of light and shadow. This will give the image a stylised look, yet keep it believable.



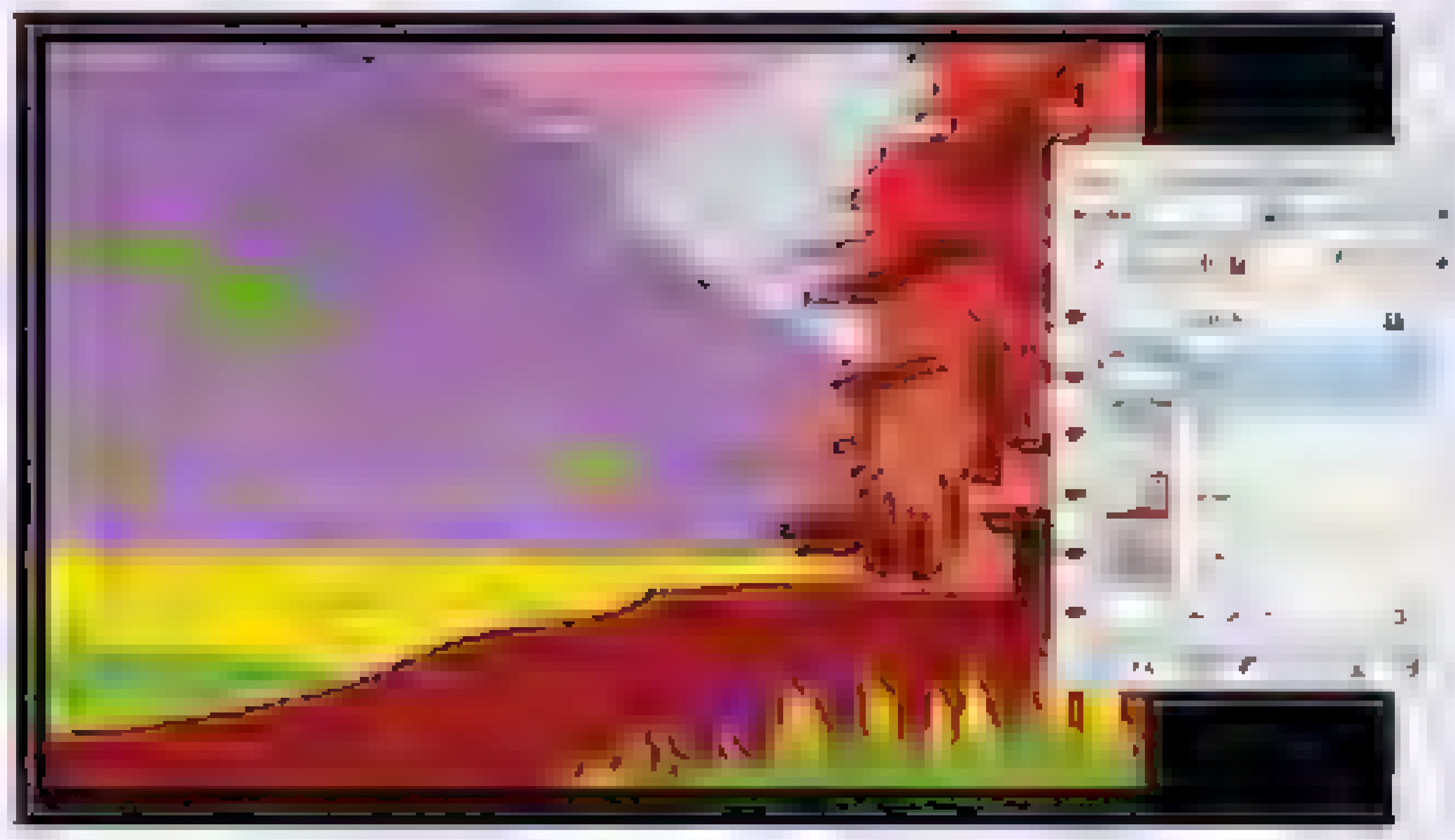
② Imagining the details

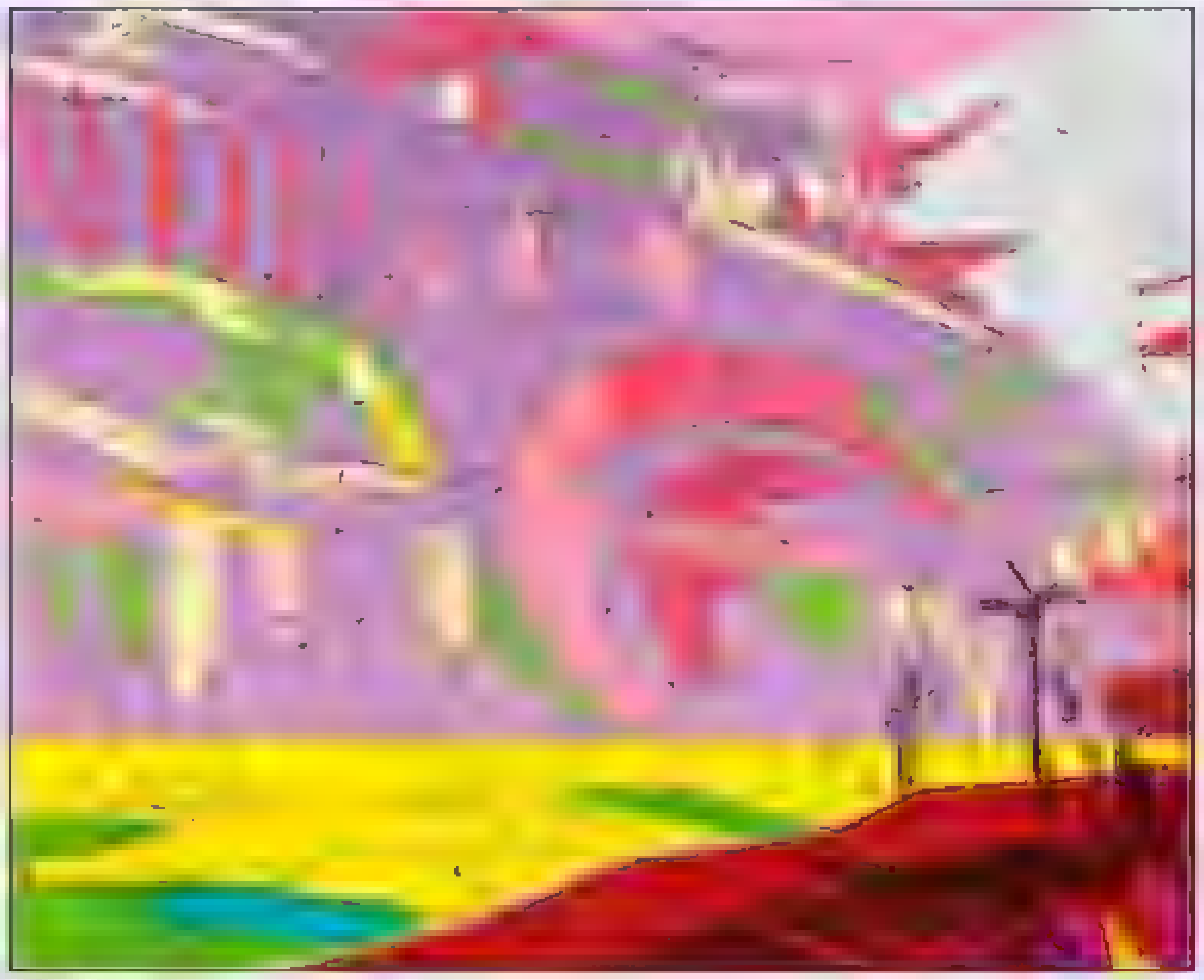
Once I have an idea of what the composition will look like, I produce some detailed environment sketches. It's not a final line drawing because I want to visualise the details without limiting my options. When I feel that I know what I want for the final image, I go on to do a quick sketch of the composition.



③ Colour composition

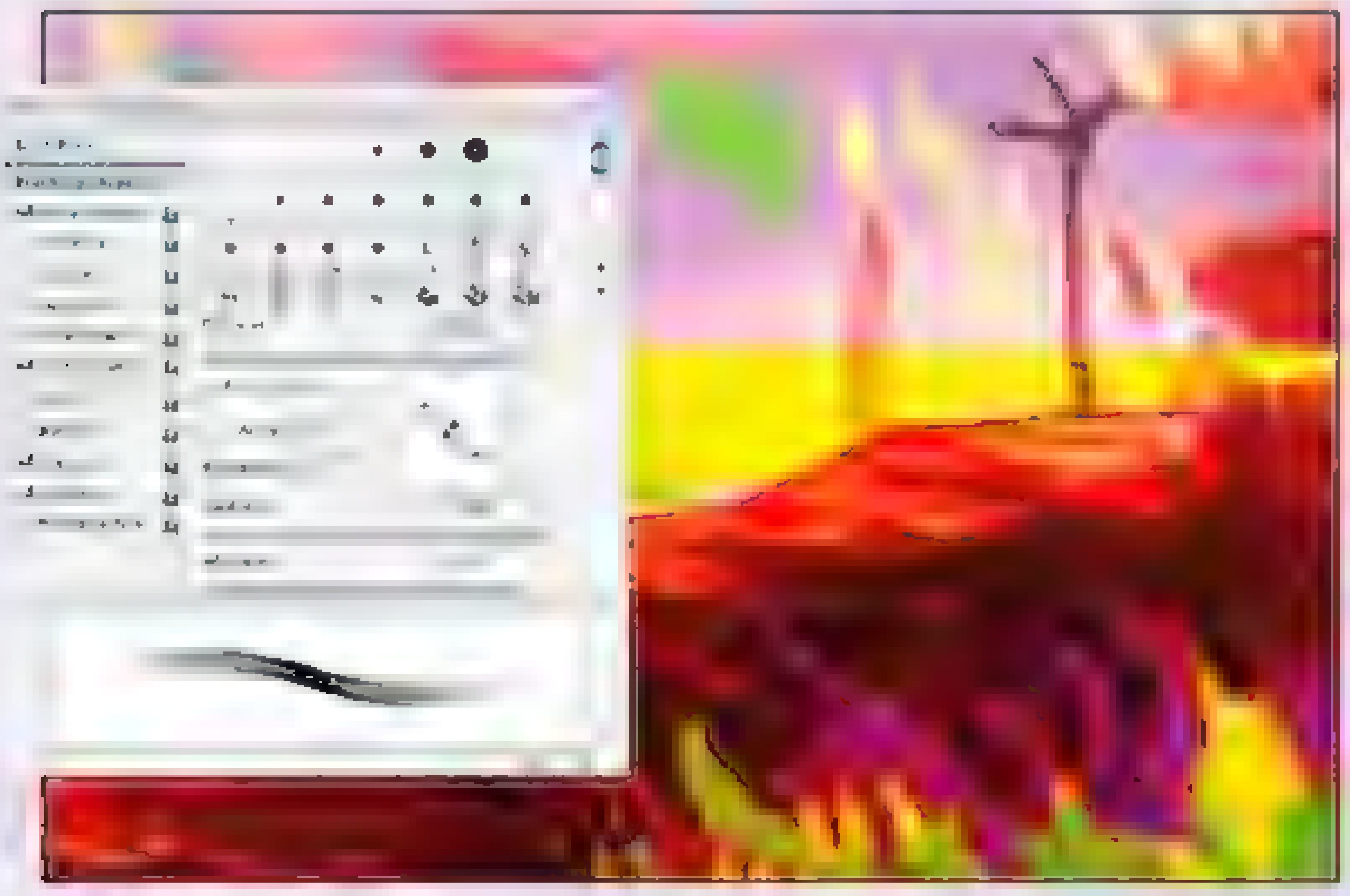
I scan in the image. Using my colour palette I paint over the scanned lines. Photoshop's Lasso and Gradient tools help me to place the colours quickly. I usually let my gradients fade from top to bottom, which gives the image an atmospheric feel, as if there's fogging around the horizon. Once I block in the colours I add more colours from the original palette to give the scene form and a stylised look.





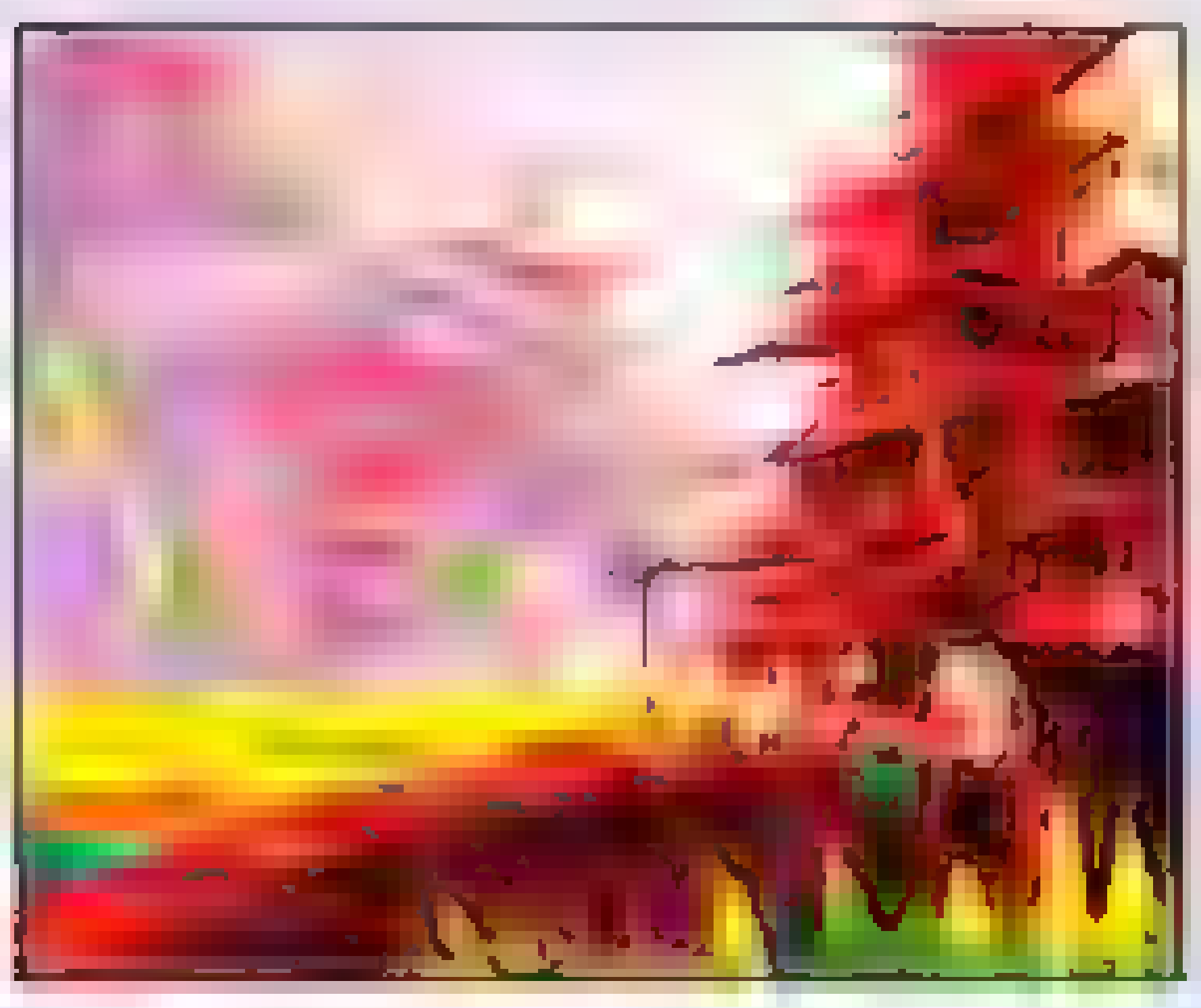
4 Colours in the distance

I pick a shade of purple for the distant buildings. From that purple shade I choose a pink-orange hue to give it some highlights. To suggest sunlight hitting on the buildings, I use a soft yellow that's closely related to the pink-orange hue. With these two other colours, I now have three colours for working on the city in the distance, rendering in the structures. I understand that many artists usually prefer to work on values instead of colours. I'm using this same logic – simply taking a different approach



5 Using flat brushes

By changing the angles of the brush, a lot of suggestion of forms can be achieved. For this workshop, I incline the brush at 45 degrees to help me capture the form of the foreground. I think that using flat brushes with the knowledge of perspective saves time and gives my work a stylised look.



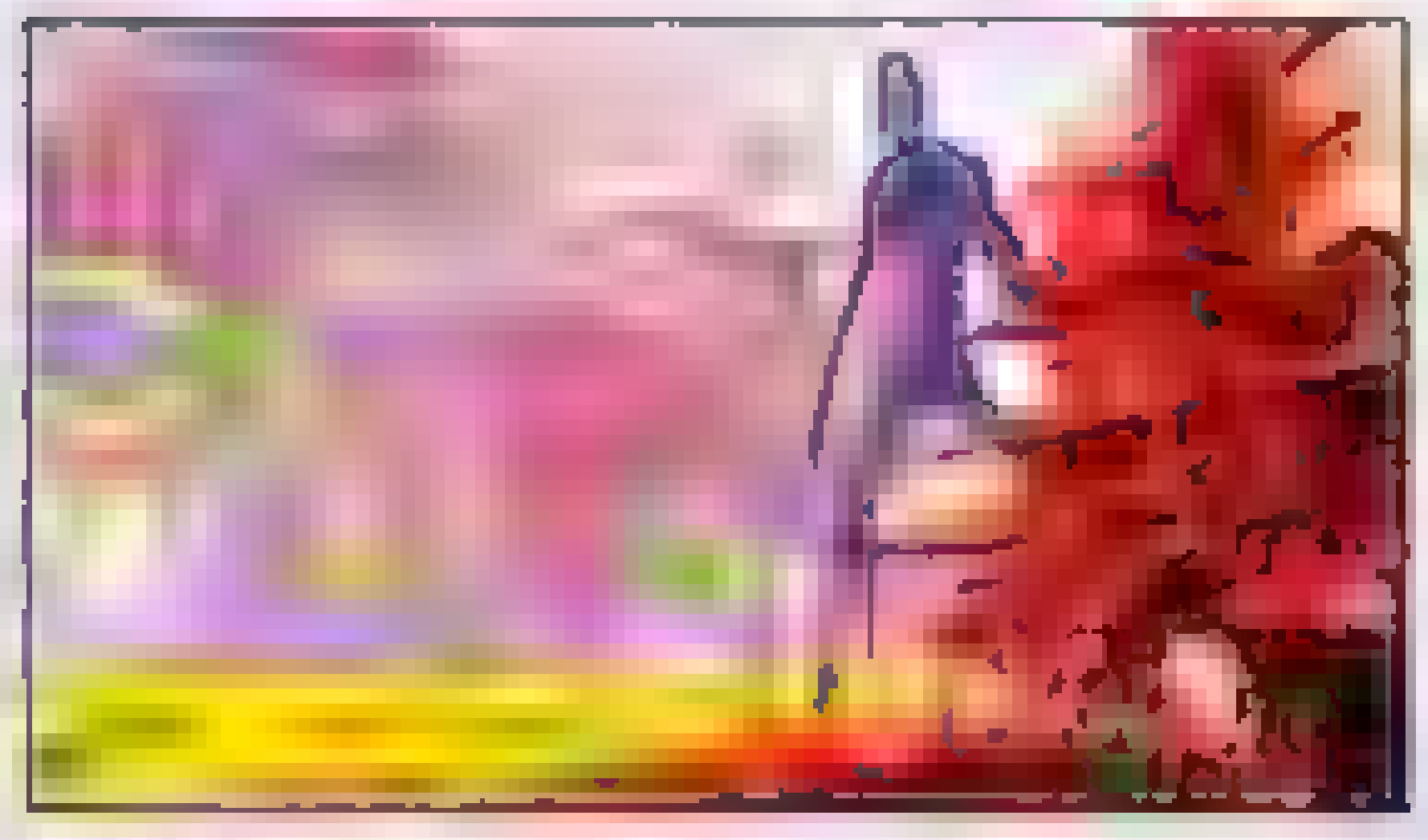
6 Painting light in overlays

One of the most effective way of painting light digitally is by using overlays. I use it here to enhance the base painting, picking a soft orange to work on sunlit areas. To keep the piece dreamy, I pick a soft brush and go over some of the areas. The result is a convincing hue of sunlight. I now have a pretty extensive variation of colours that work well with each other

PRO SECRETS

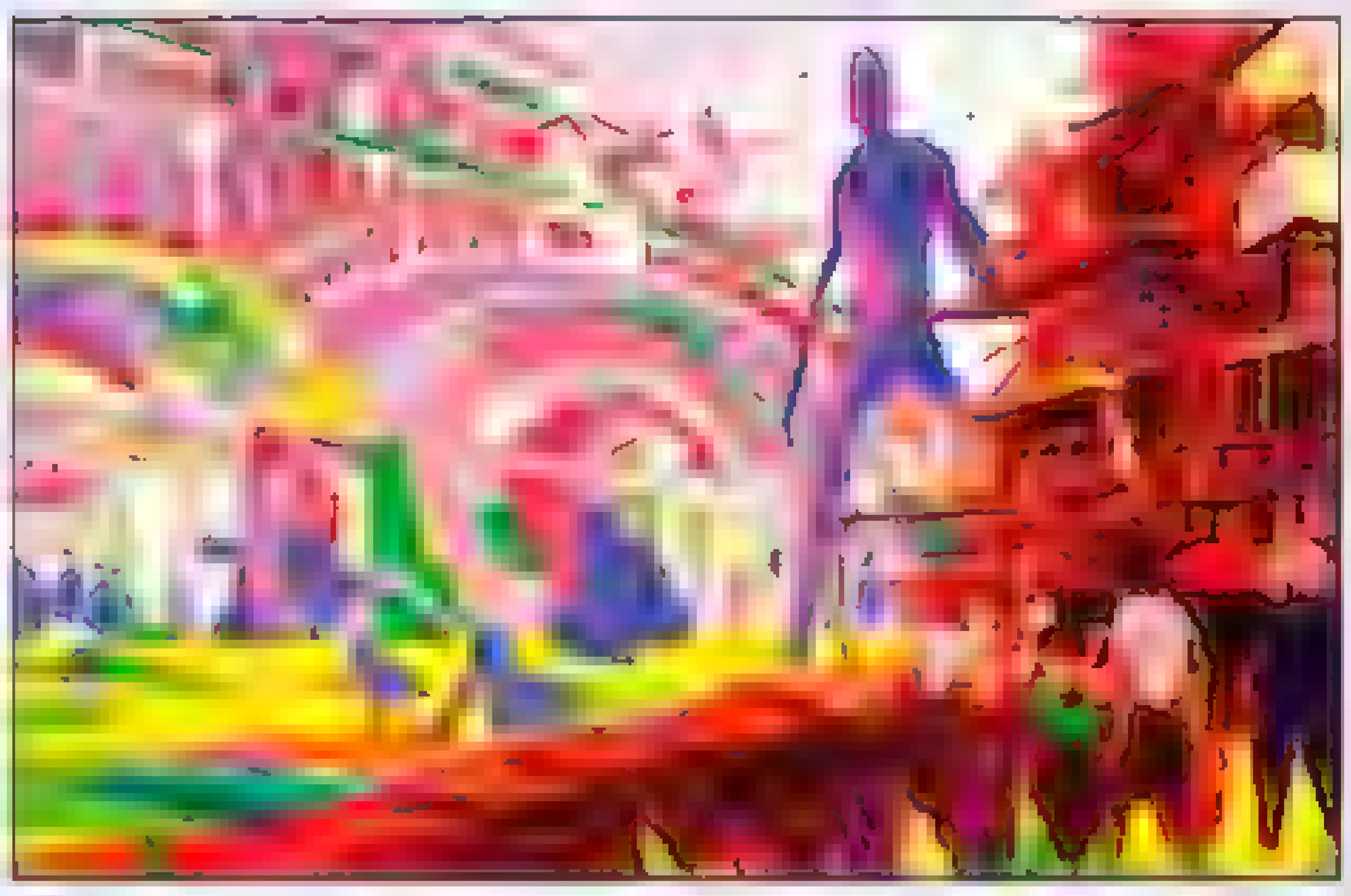
Check for errors

One of the advantages of painting digitally is the ability to flip images. [illegible] helps me to spot basic errors that I might have missed, as well as highlight opportunities for improving the composition. I would strongly recommend building this step into your art process.



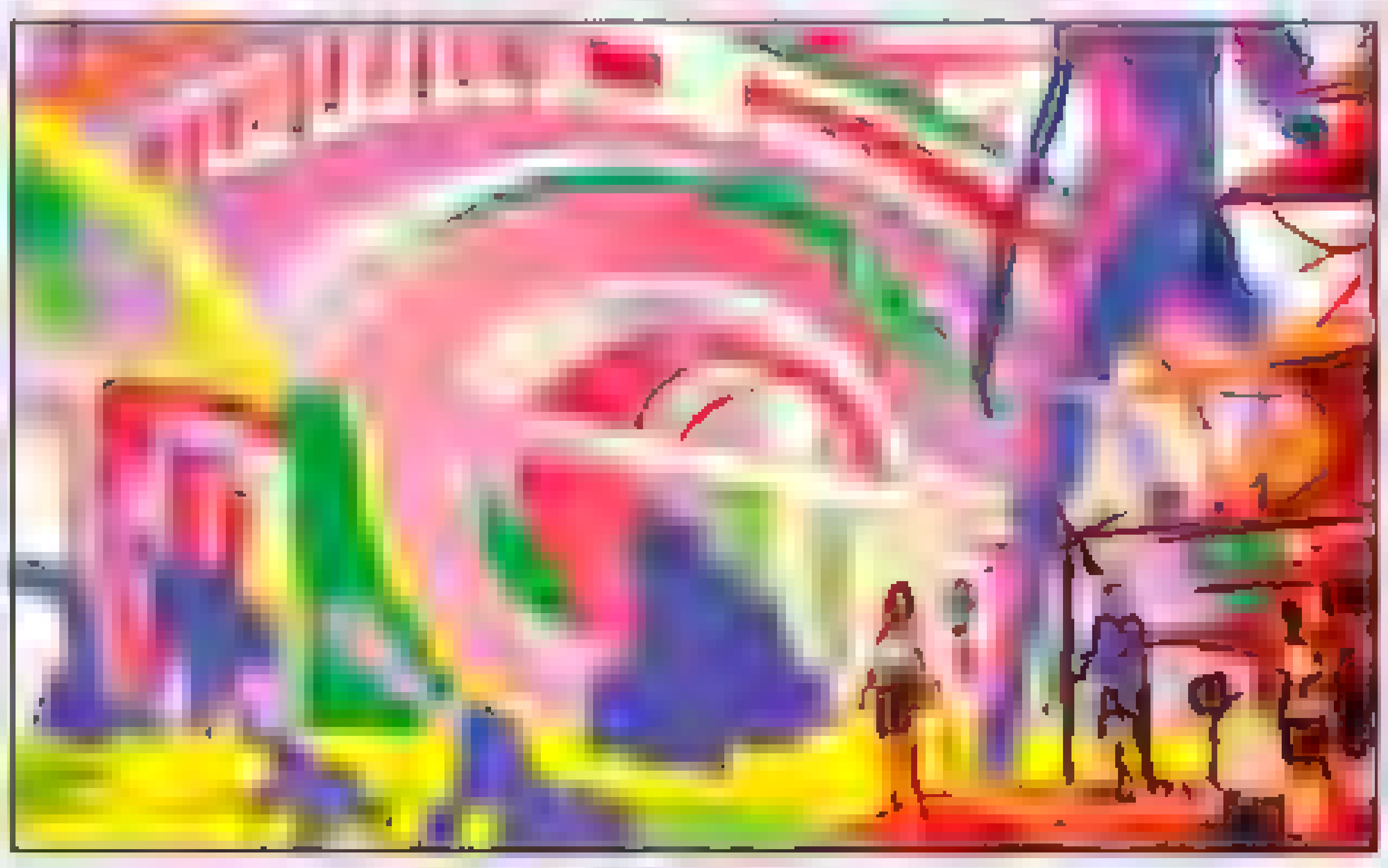
7 Fixing the focal point

I now finalise the composition by blocking in the focal point of this work. Earlier I drew a blue giant humanoid in one of my thumbnails. This unifies the piece and gives it depth. I want to make this scene a clash of different cultures, and so I add more of the blue aliens and juxtapose them against the tiny humans in the foreground.



8 Adding details

Now that I have a solid base I can take the scene to completion. It's like building a model. I start with the basic forms and then adding interest as I go along. I didn't zoom in on individual parts to render during any of the previous stages because I believe in keeping the work in harmony. Rendering in the early stages may not work as well, especially for an image that's colourful and hard to control.



Shortcuts

Quick Save

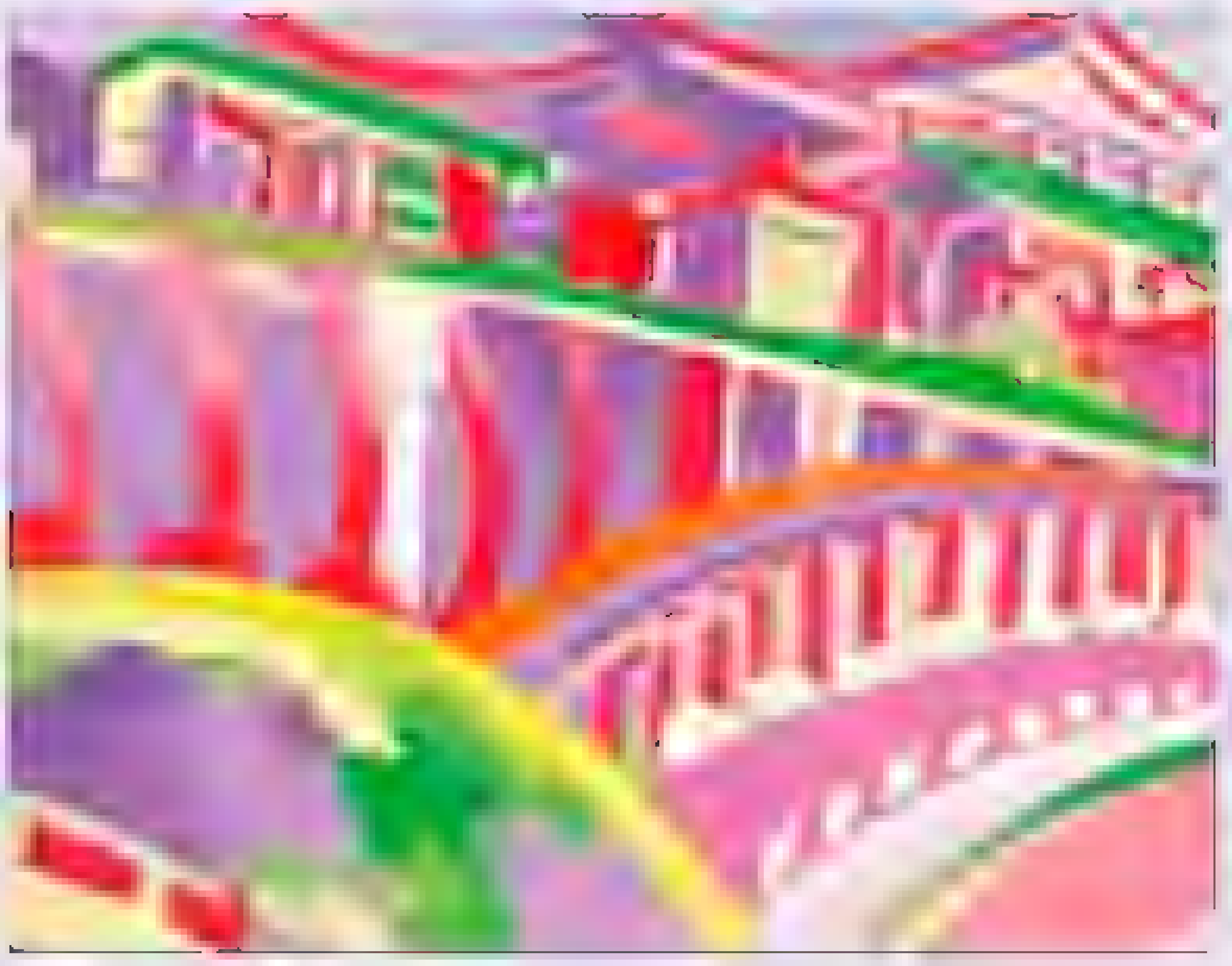
Ctrl+S (PC)

Cmd+S (Mac)

[illegible] painting program crash.

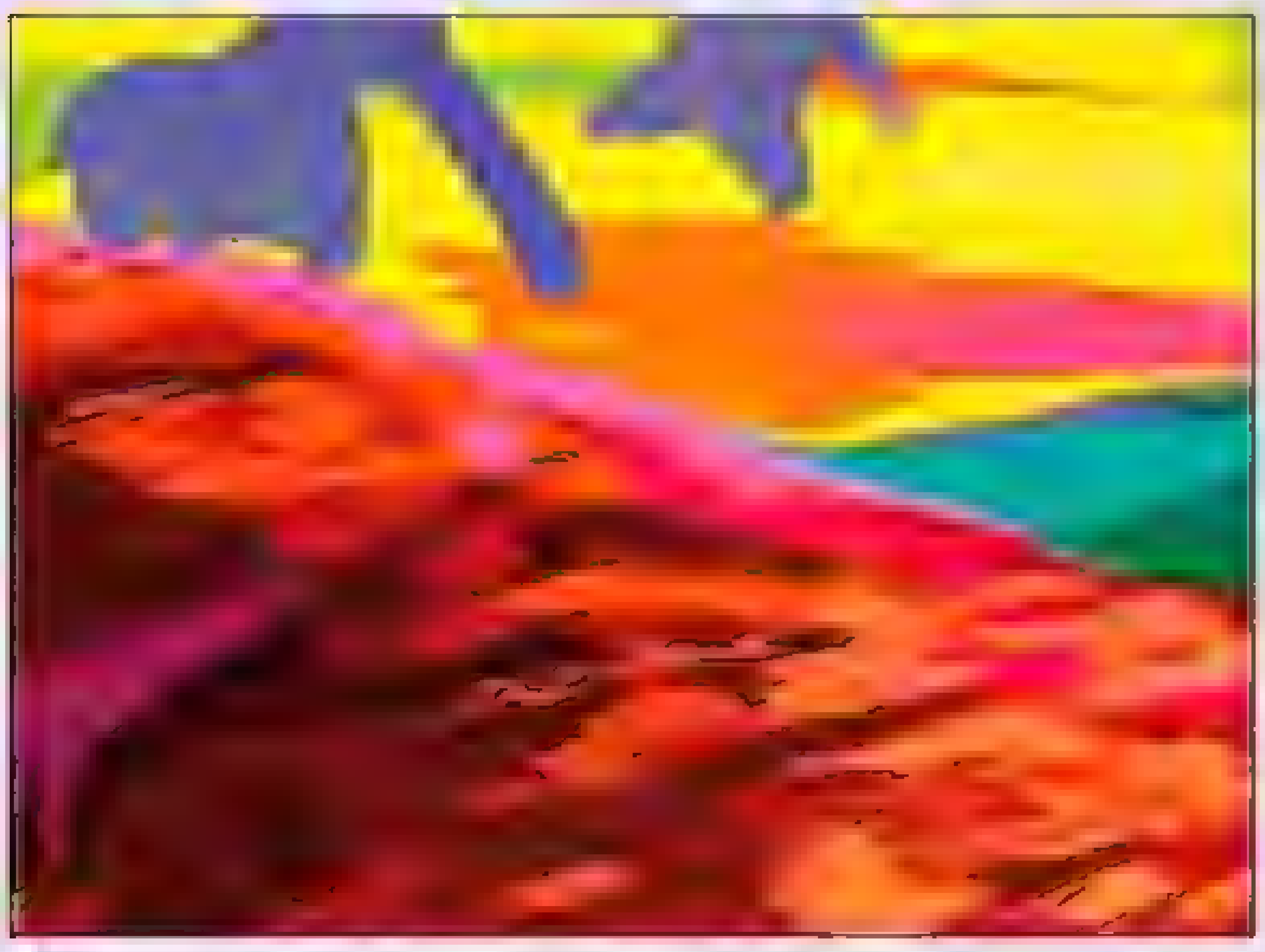
9 Airbrush and Flat brushes

Due to my quick work process there's still a fair bit of rendering work to be done. I usually use the Airbrush tool and go over certain areas to achieve a clean look. I usually set the brush to Other Dynamics, mapping Opacity with Pen Pressure. Turning off Shape Dynamics is useful for doing blending work. It gives a consistent touch, making things look very clean



10 Suggesting forms

I continue using the Flat brush at 90 degrees horizontally and vertically to add layers and depth to the city. By placing colours next to each other in relation to the perspective, an almost pattern like façade can be created. I enjoy playing around with this pattern stage using flat brushes. I wouldn't say this is careful planning, but more a case of surprising myself at times, letting inspiration come to me

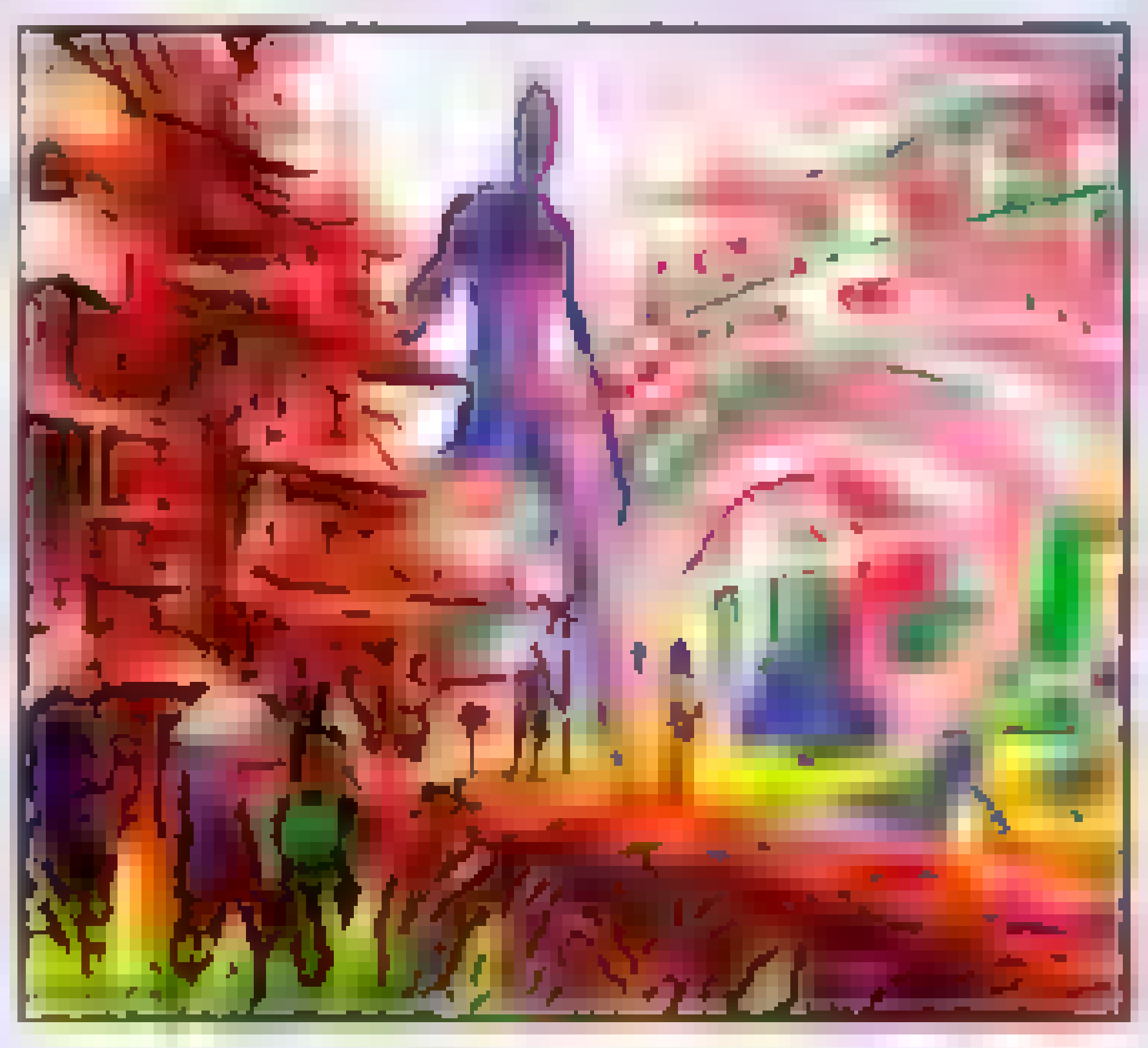


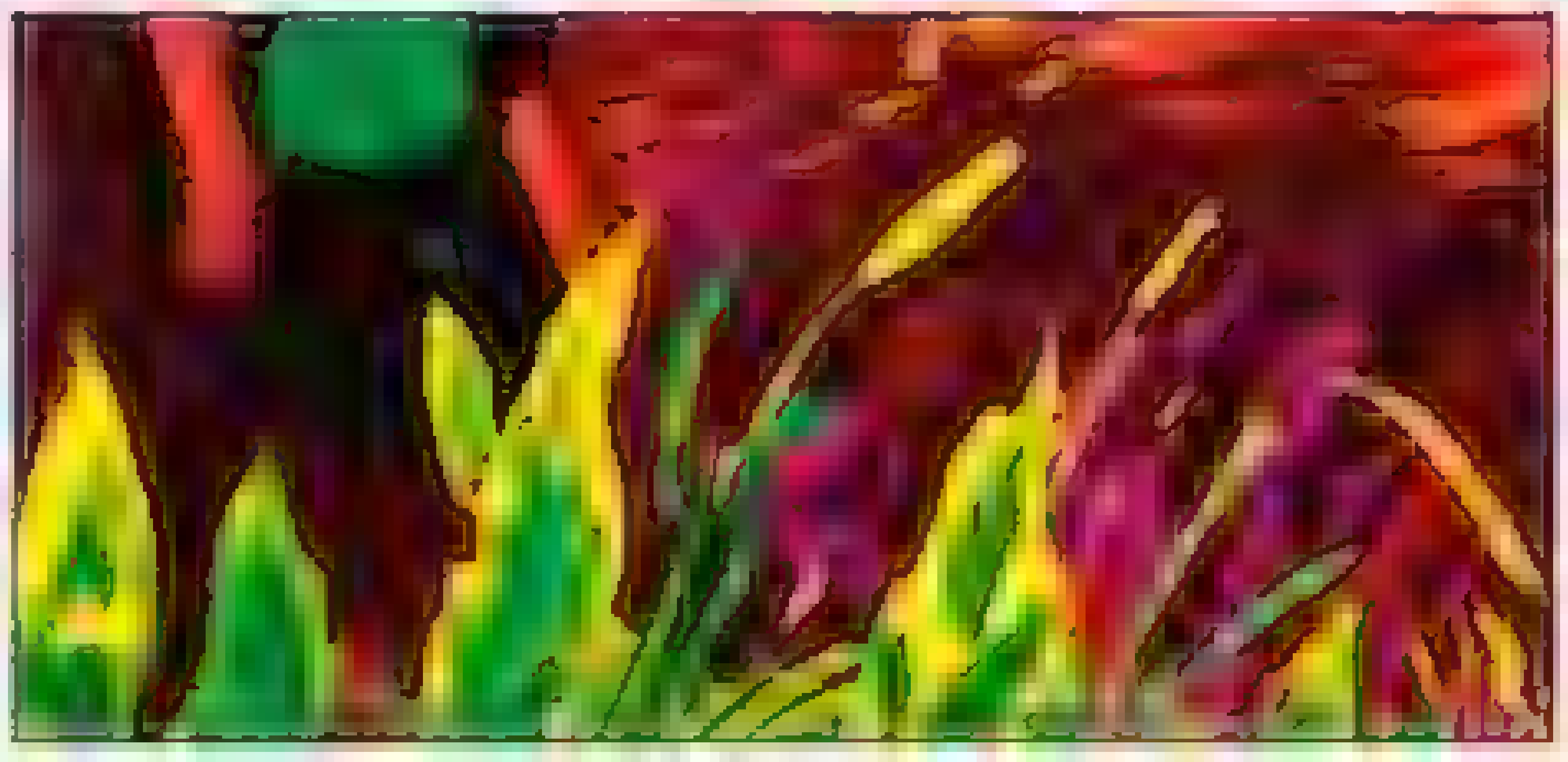
11 Detailing the foreground

I switch back to the Flat brush and incline it slightly to paint the ground. By using orange as the flat ground and the darker shade to suggest the slope, a stylised dirt path can be rendered with the brush strokes closely following the form of the path itself

12 Flipping horizontally

Flipping the canvas horizontally gives you a different view of the same piece of work and enables you to pick out errors. As it turns out, flipping helps me see that the scene looks better with the blue figure coming in from the left. I go on further in the process of detailing and add more interest to the work. I'm still relying on my Flat brushes, inclining them in accordance with the forms and carefully adding interest





Shortcuts

Stamp visible

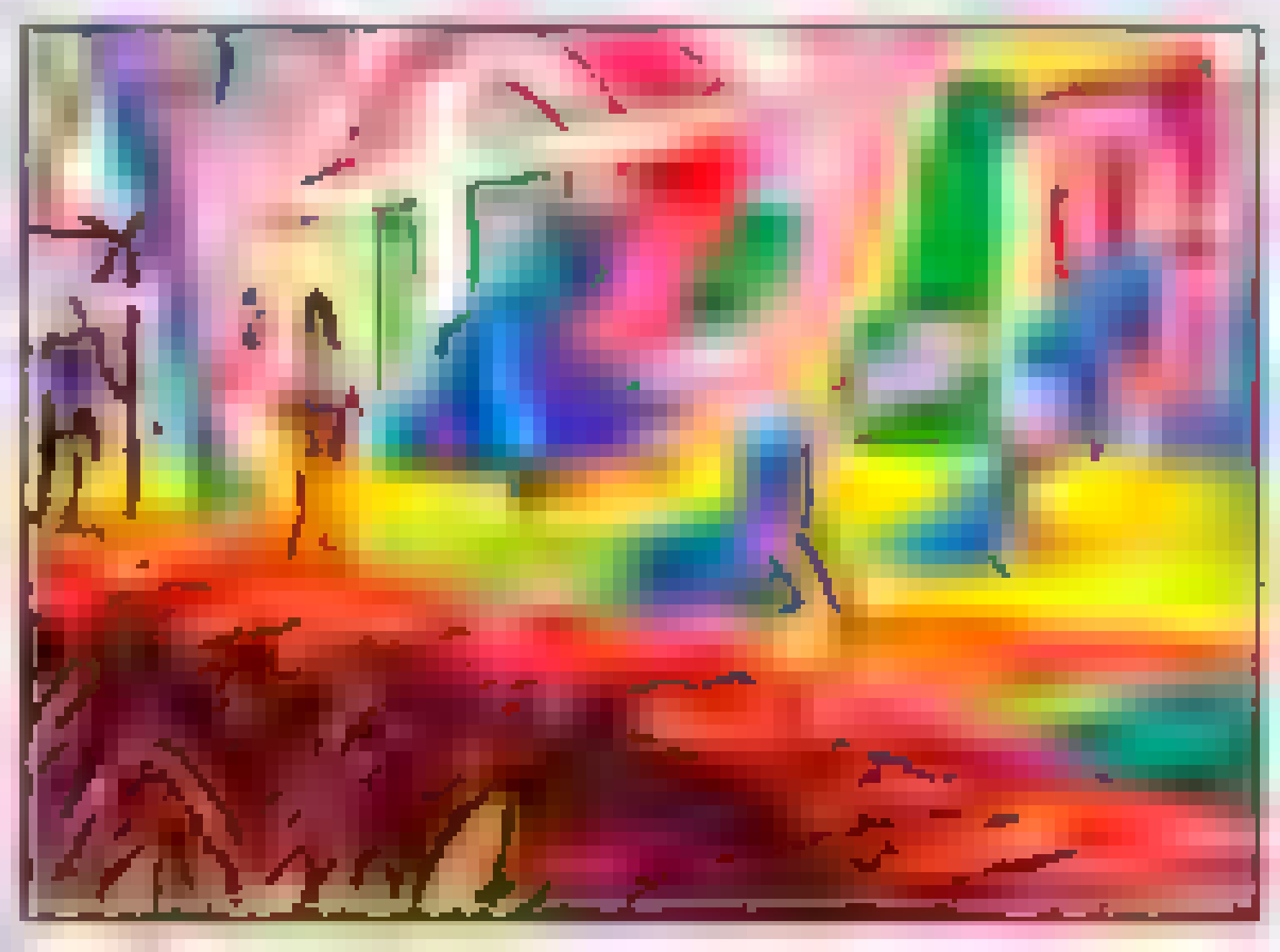
Shift+Ctrl+Alt+E (PC)

Shift+Cmd+Alt+E (Mac)

[illegible]

13 Painting leaves

I've always enjoyed the background art of manga for its bright use of colour. In the past I've painted traditionally, and I'm now able to use such techniques in more stylised, digital pieces. Here, I'm painting the leaves as I would traditionally, but using bright green and yellow. I give them solidity by imagining the shapes of the leaves and placing the colours side by side, making them look vibrant



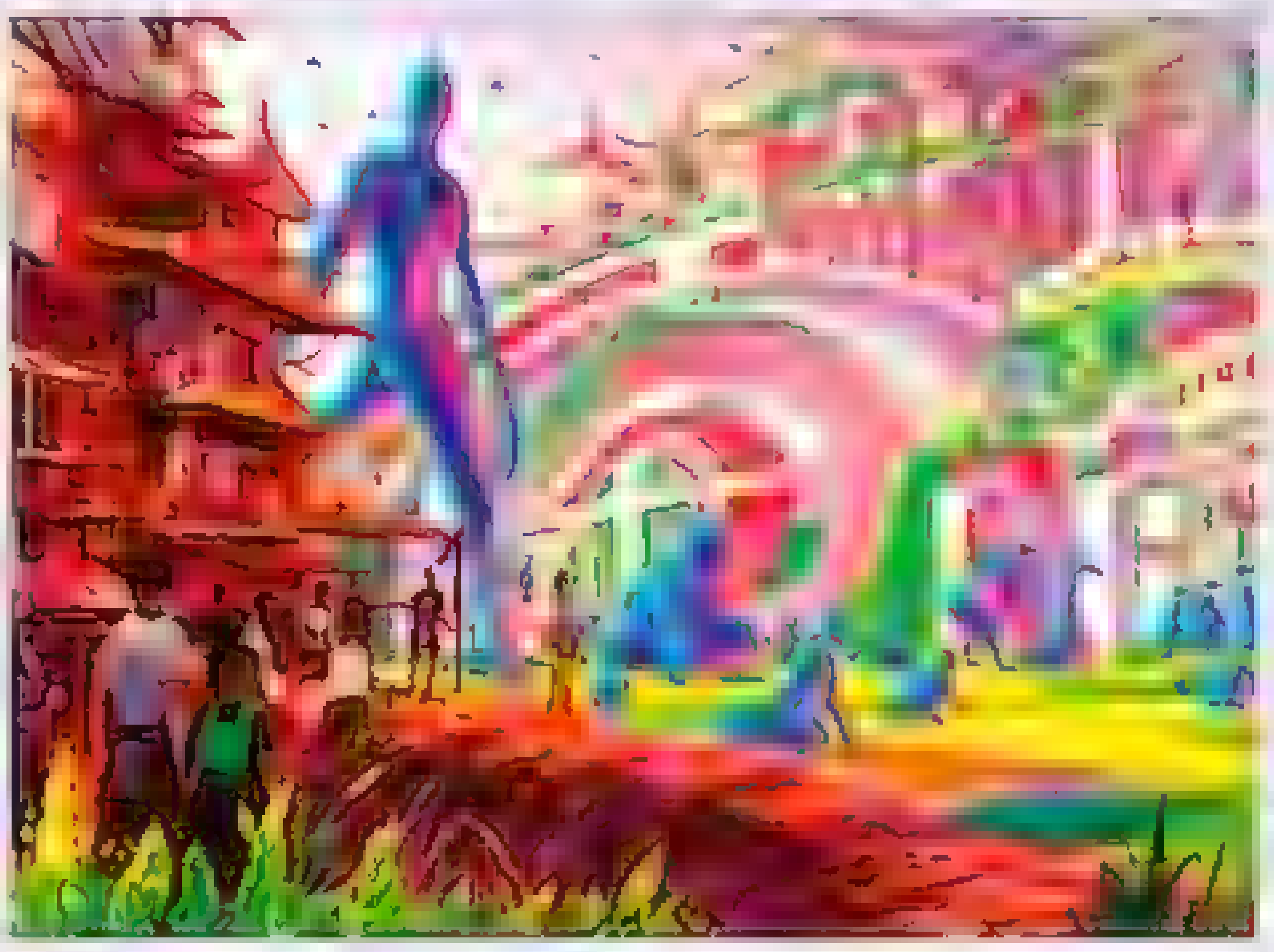
PRO SECRETS

Quick touch-ups

A useful way to work on values is to add a Colour layer and fill it with white. Now the work becomes greyscale. By adding Soft Light layer, you can work on adjusting the values of specific areas right where you want them by painting in black or white on the Soft [illegible]

14 Rendering the characters

I add a pink/purple tint for the shadow side of the blue aliens. I want to make them look reflective and clean. Now that I've established three different colours, I can go on to render forms by changing the amount and the way the colours are placed in accordance with each other. I've used this technique of multiplying colours from one basic shade colour throughout this piece of work.



15 Final touches

Now that almost everything looks more or less right, it's just a case of touching up the image, adding details and blending here and there to give the work a more finished look.

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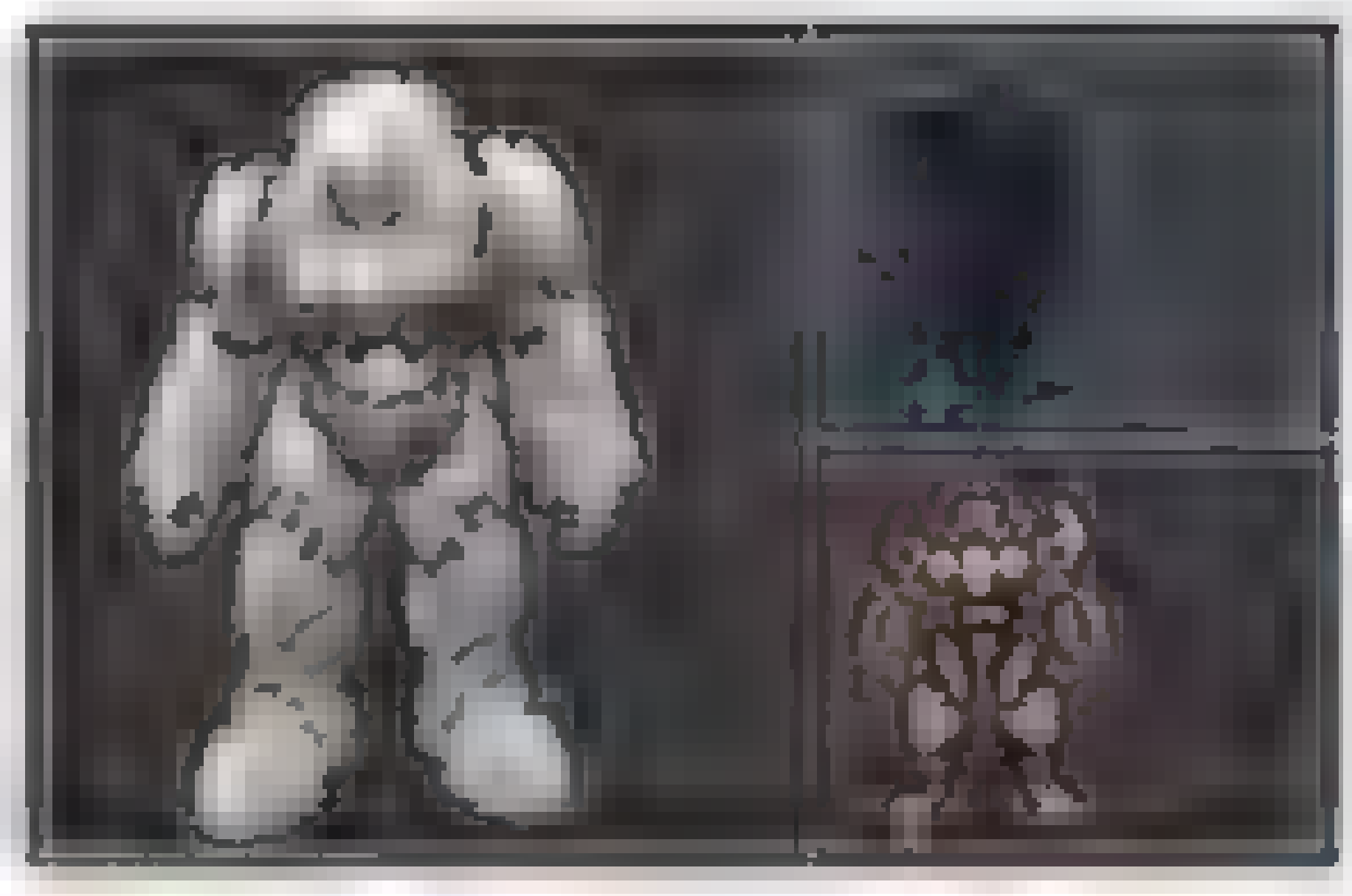
Reviews

Artist's Choice Award
Software and hardware with a five-star rating receives the FX Artist's Choice award

The latest digital art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team…

13 PRODUCTS ON TEST



SOFTWARE & HARDWARE

102 Cintiq 24HD
It's still wince-inducing expensive. But it makes you want to paint.

104 ZBrush 4R2
Update offers exciting possibilities.

104 Cinema 4D R13
One of the best tools for 3D art just got even better – it's accessible, too.

105 MotionStudio 3D
Get great results from this new, intuitive logo animator.

105 Photoshop Elements
All the basics of Photoshop at around an eighth of the price.

BOOKS

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Jack Bosson is the voice of experience

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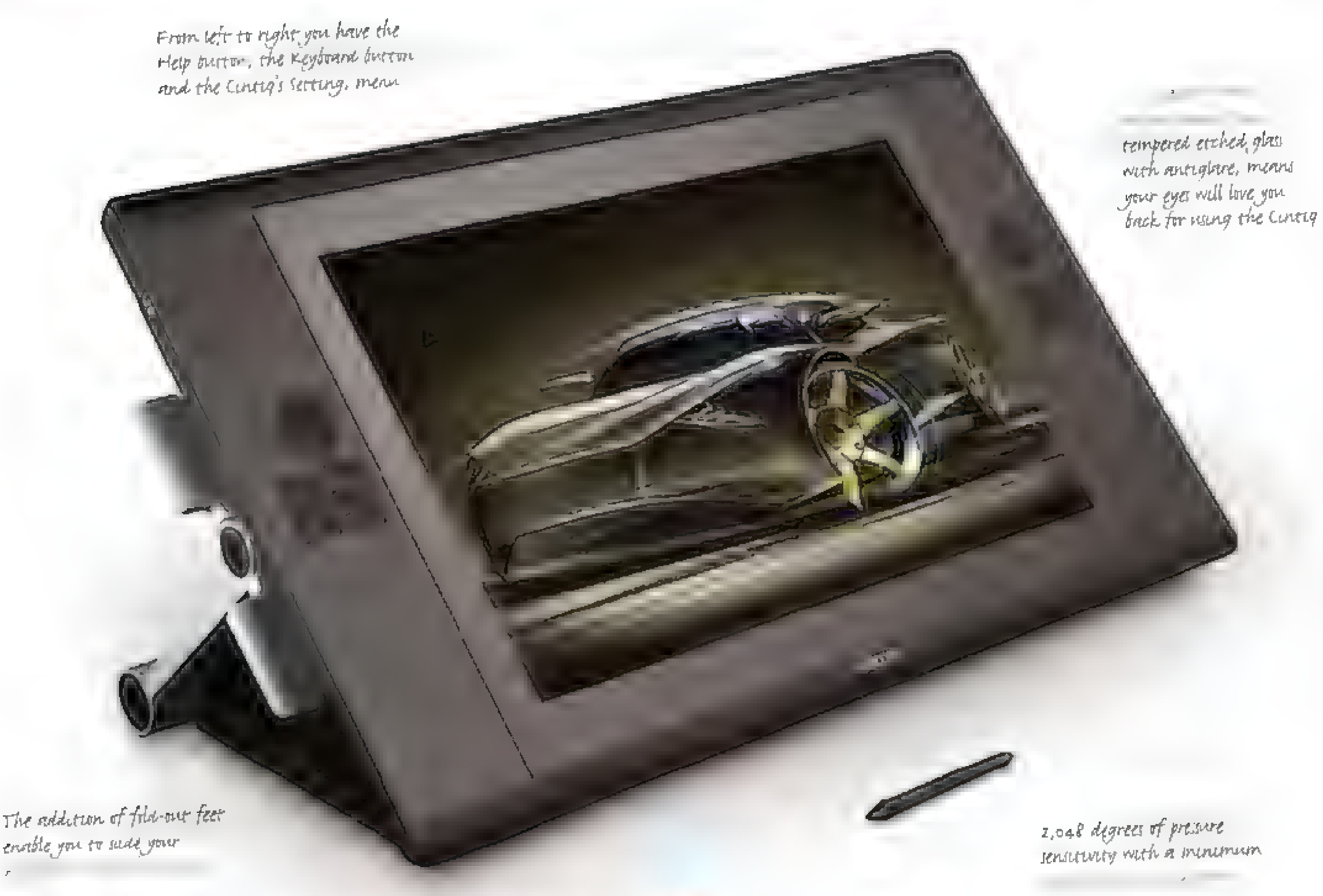
DRAWING THE FIGURE

RATINGS EXPLAINED ✎✎✎✎✎ Magnificent ✎✎✎✎ Good ✎✎✎ Ordinary ✎✎ Poor ✎ Atrocious



From left to right you have the Help button, the Keyboard button and the Cintiq's Setting menu

tempered etched glass with antiglare, means your eyes will love you back for using the Cintiq

The addition of fold-out feet enable you to slide your

2,048 degrees of pressure sensitivity with a minimum

Cintiq 24HD

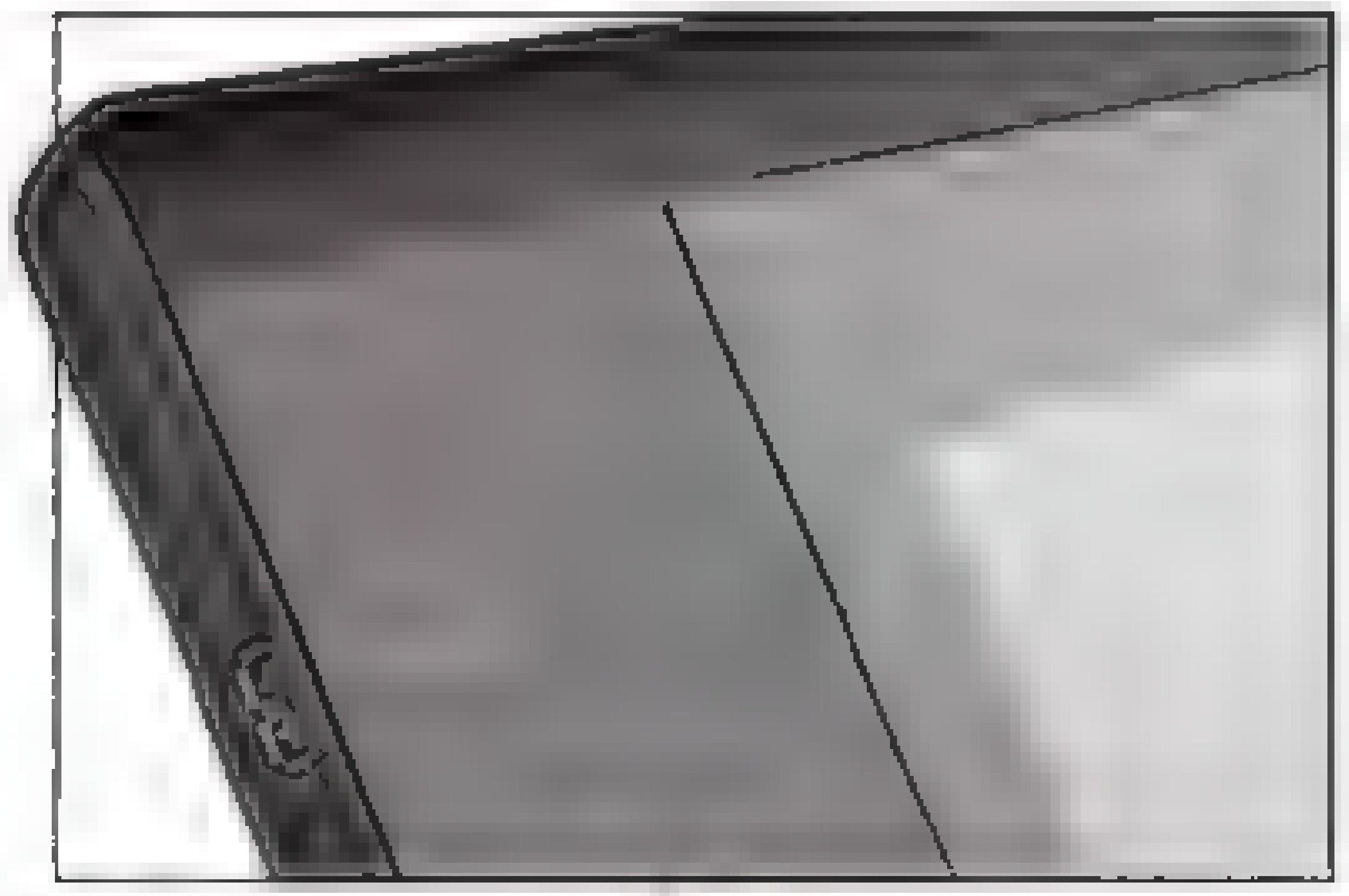
MY GOD, IT'S FULL OF STARS When does a high price tag become an investment? When technology that inspires you to be creative evolves...

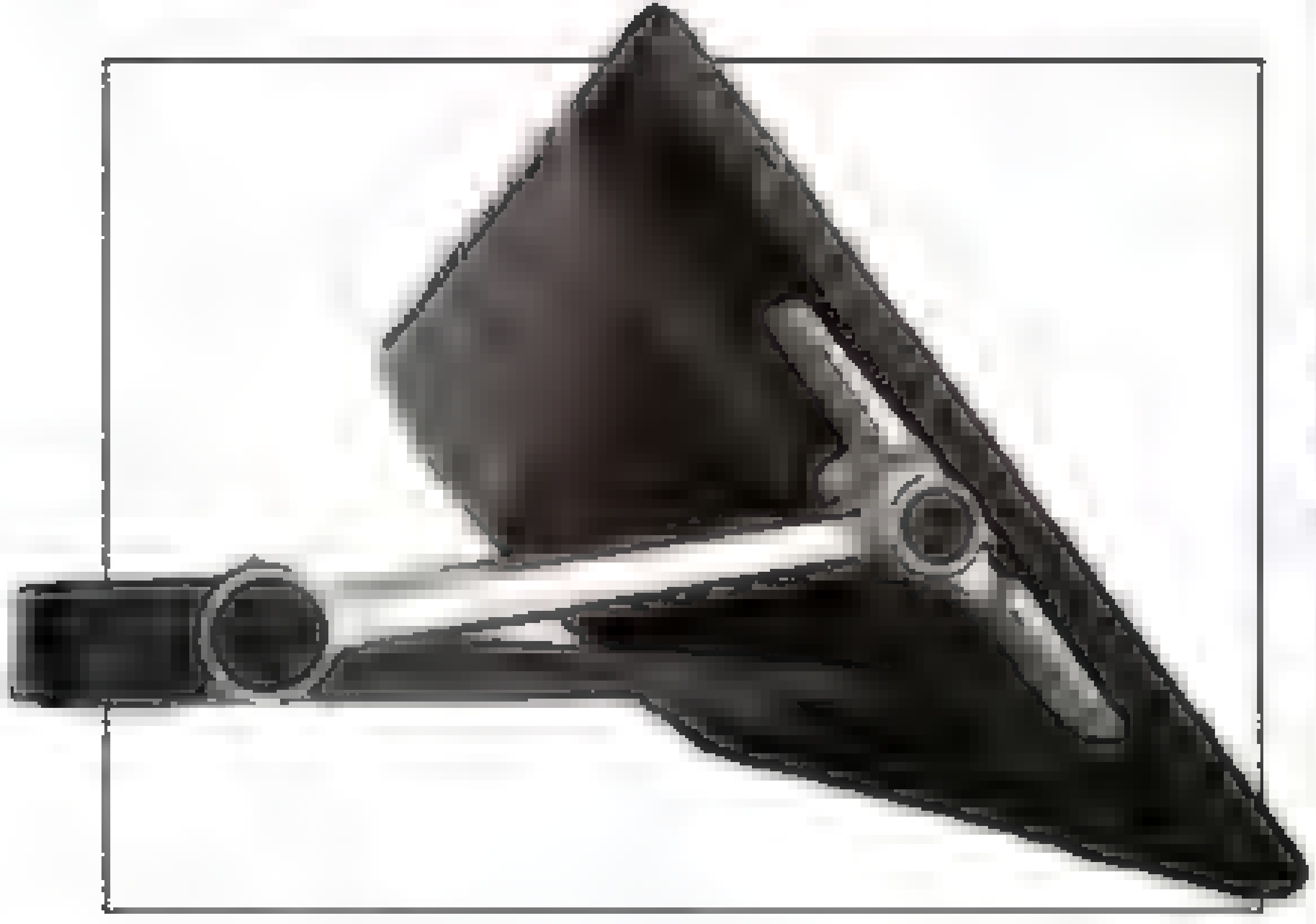
Price **Company** **Web** **Contact**

Five programmable buttons, plus three more for the Touch Ring, are placed on both edges and arranged within easy reach of one another

Wacom's Cintiq series has always provoked debate in the ImagineFX office and among our arty friends, some of who are passionate advocates of Wacom's pen-on-screen technology. So when the new Cintiq 24HD was finally hauled onto the ImagineFX art desk, we were keen to see if the attractive design and impressive screen size weren't the only improvements.

It came as no surprise that Wacom looked to the award-winning Intuos4 in terms of styling and controls the Touch Ring being a welcome addition to the new Cintiq's design. Having the more ergonomically pleasing ring enables you to assign functions like Brush size Zoom and Rotation the latter being





Wacom has packed away all the cables into the Cintiq's base and hidden the connectors behind clip-off flaps – tidy

The spring-assisted handles are effortless to use and reassuringly secure. They have to be to move the 30kg display

essential because you can't physically rotate the Cintiq screen – replacing the Touch Strips found on older models. You can only assign three functions per ring, unlike the four stages on the Intuos4, but thanks to the direct access keys you no longer have to toggle through those options.

Other new bits to press include three understated buttons located above the top-right corner of the screen that take you to some useful features. The first overlays an annotated diagram of your Express Key, Touch Ring and Pen layout, and if you want to assign new functions you can access the Wacom Settings menu from here also. The following button brings up a floating QWERTY keyboard, so if you know all your software shortcuts then this is a great way to streamline your workflow. The final button takes you directly to the Cintiq Settings menu, negating the need to find it through your OS.

Replicating a more natural drawing experience has always been the Cintiq's core appeal to digital creatives. After all, the more relaxed you feel while drawing for prolonged periods, the less likely you are to lose workflow momentum. The Cintiq 24HD offers various ergonomic features to put you at ease: you can rest your arms on the wide bevelled edges, the Express Keys are well spaced and being able to extend the screen over the edge of the desk to rest it in your lap is a laid-back masterstroke.

Yet the most impressive update has to be the new 1,920x1,200 H-IPS panel that delivers where previous displays fell short in both clarity and colour gamut. Specifically, it's now 92 per cent Adobe RGB, a welcome increase from the 72 per cent sRGB of the Cintiq 21's. The screen has a matt anti-glare finish, but that's not at the expense of colour accuracy.

The Cintiq 24HD is the combination of improved technology standards and Wacom's unwavering commitment to evolve and innovate based on how artists use their products. Put simply, it makes you want to start painting. Yes, there's still that wince-inducing price tag, but if you've finally found that two grand you misplaced earlier then this should be your first Cintiq. If you already own a previous model then our advice is to avoid seeing the 24HD in action – unless you already know someone in the market for your second-hand Cintiq.

> **“Yes, there's still that wince-inducing price tag. But put simply, this Cintiq makes you want to start painting”**

DETAILS

[illegible]

System Requirements

PC: Windows 7/Vista [illegible]

Rating

[illegible]

DR CHEE MING WONG

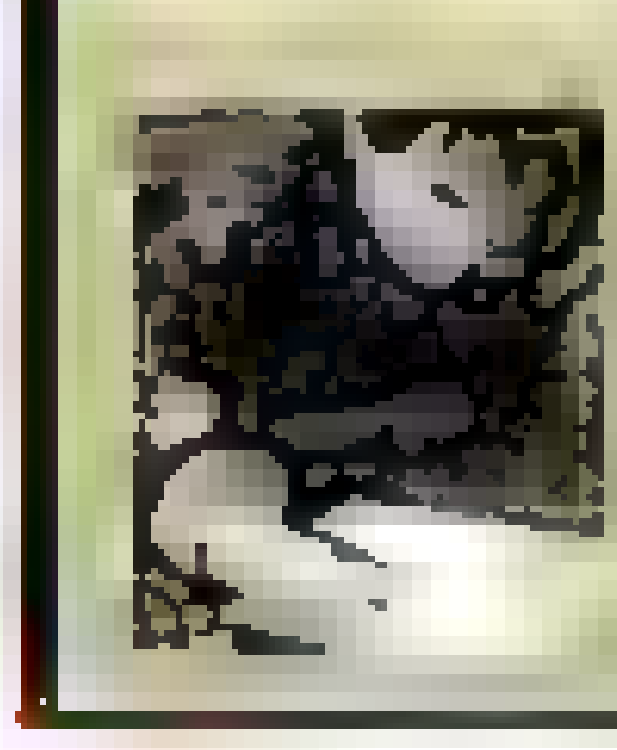
The head of Opus Artz checks out Wacom's latest beast

What first appealed to you about the new Cintiq?
Because of how the device can be adjusted to suit the individual, it's clear that Wacom has spent time observing artists' postures, seating positions and how they use tablets. For the tech folks, it has a far better visual fidelity due to improved gamut display.

How does it compare to drawing on your previous Cintiq?
Well, you'll need to rethink your workstation setup, because of its size and weight. You can then take advantage of the increased amount of digital real estate and ergonomic improvements on offer. It features similar pen and nib technology from the Intuos4 and there's a definite improvement in terms of painting strokes and accuracy in mark making. And the device seems to be scratch-proof.

Any nice surprises – or niggles?
The improved visual fidelity and accurate mark-making mean I can produce more accurate visuals for clients. Build quality is good – the device feels robust and well engineered – and once you've configured the buttons your keyboard will be relegated to typing emails, or for some, a few Function key shortcuts. The ability to provide paint-overs or explain various art principles due to the increased screen size and resolution comes in handy. On occasion, the calibration slipped and required a restart. This was caused by an OS X driver issue. It helps to also have a spare mouse for ease of swapping between monitors without having to rely on your toggle button.

Final thoughts?
Because it costs only slightly more than the Cintiq 21UX, I'd say the Cintiq24HD is a worthwhile investment for the pro artist that will end up paying for itself over four to five years.



Dr Wong, or Koshime as he's also known, is the director and founder of concept art studio Opus Artz, based in London

www.opusartz.co.uk

ZBrush 4R2's new tools include LightCap materials that generate their own light and an improved Preview Render system

ZBrush 4R2

ROCK-SOLID The natural sculpture tool is still daunting for newcomers, but its toolset offers exciting possibilities

Price Company Web Contact

Offering a brilliant alternative to conventional 3D modelling software, ZBrush enables you to sculpt a design as if you were working with digital clay. It's amazingly powerful software, but its reliance on complex underlying technology shows through: you get the best out of ZBrush when you invest time in learning its conventions.

R2, a free update for ZBrush 4, offers a new sculpting system that sidesteps one such convention rather neatly. DynaMesh enables you to sculpt without paying regard to your model's underlying topology – the distribution of polygons that form the model, and which can readily be distorted as you push and pull your sculpture into shape. When you're done, ZBrush adjusts the topology automatically to get a nice, even distribution. The approach removes a barrier to learning artists creating sculptures of sufficient technical quality to export to other software or output to a 3D printer – and it's another step in removing complexity from the 3D artist's workflow entirely.

Pixologic is renowned for piling on tons of new features even between its major .0 updates and this R2 update doesn't hold back when it comes to new features. The Best Preview Render system is now able to display background environments to help you plan how to integrate your model into a scene, while the new LightCap system enables you to use an object as a light source. More minor adjustments include a lovely Curve tool, for defining a path for your brush stroke to follow that enables path adjustment afterwards; and a new Slice brush, which splits up your model, either into separate groups or as new models.

Even for experienced users, the rate of change in ZBrush can be dizzying and sometimes confusing, but the ride Pixologic is taking us on is thrilling.

ZBrush goes further than ever before in removing the technical barriers to creating great models

DETAILS

Cinema 4D offers the choice of painting a 3D model directly or using traditional UV maps

Cinema 4D R13

GET ANIMATED One of the best tools for 3D just got better

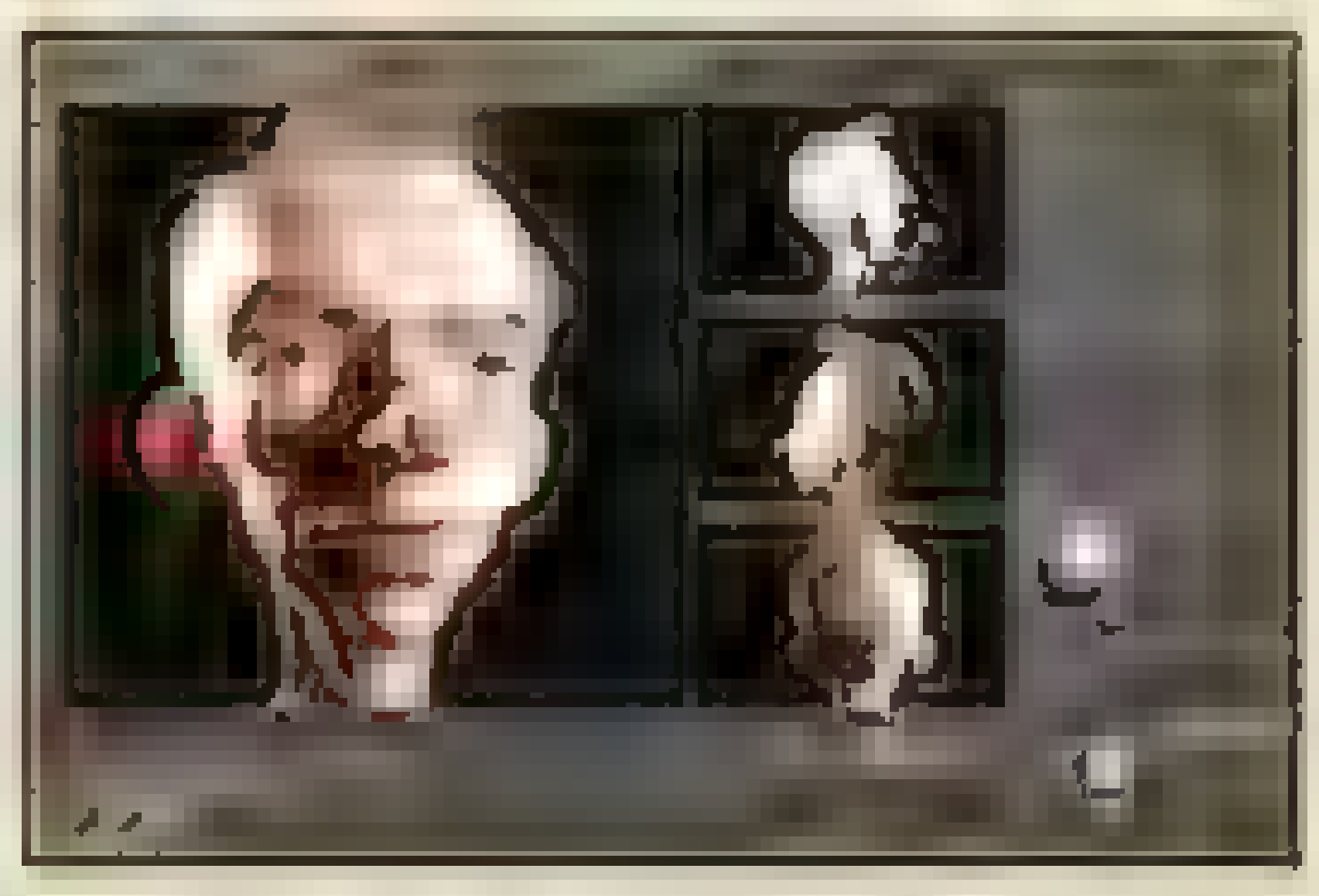
Price From £780
Company Maxon
Web www.maxon.net
RATING

Cinema 4D is one of the best choices available for anyone seeking to explore 3D art and animation, thanks to a combination of an accessible, well-conceived interface and enough power to accommodate your developing 3D skills. The latest version reinforces its credentials with a revamped render system.

The render system is kept accessible by rooting its settings in the conventions of photography. You can set your virtual camera's exposure and adjust the lens depth of field. The rendering improvements extend to the in-viewport scene, which can display much richer real-time information.

Cinema 4D's greatest strength remains its animation toolset, which is boosted further in R13 by auto-rigging options that make it easy to get characters ready to animate. There's also a library of presets for walk cycles, saving lots of time.

With some sensible changes to enhance an already excellent interface, Cinema 4D R13 reaffirms the software's status as a capable all-round package that's one of the best ways you can get started in 3D.



In Cinema 4D R13 the tools for creating and rendering characters are greatly improved

CorelMags.com

MotionStudio 3D offers an accessible route to creating animated logos and title sequences

MotionStudio 3D

POETRY IN MOTION Great results from this new logo animator

Price From £80
Company Corel
Web www.corel.com
RATING ✍✍✍✍

Motion graphics is the industry term for the endless round of spinning logos you see in front of movies, to cite one prominent use. It's an area where Cinema 4D (reviewed opposite) excels, but the affordably priced MotionStudio 3D aims to bring motion graphics to the masses.

The interface looks daunting at first, but creating a sequence is actually pretty simple: choose a preset, select any individual component to edit, then use the Timeline to animate it. MotionStudio uses keyframes: where you go to a frame in your sequence, set the state of your objects, and move to another point. It's easy to grasp but gives you precise control over everything in your scene. Real-time previews provide a good idea of how your sequence is looking as you work on it, while exporting to the final video is straightforward.

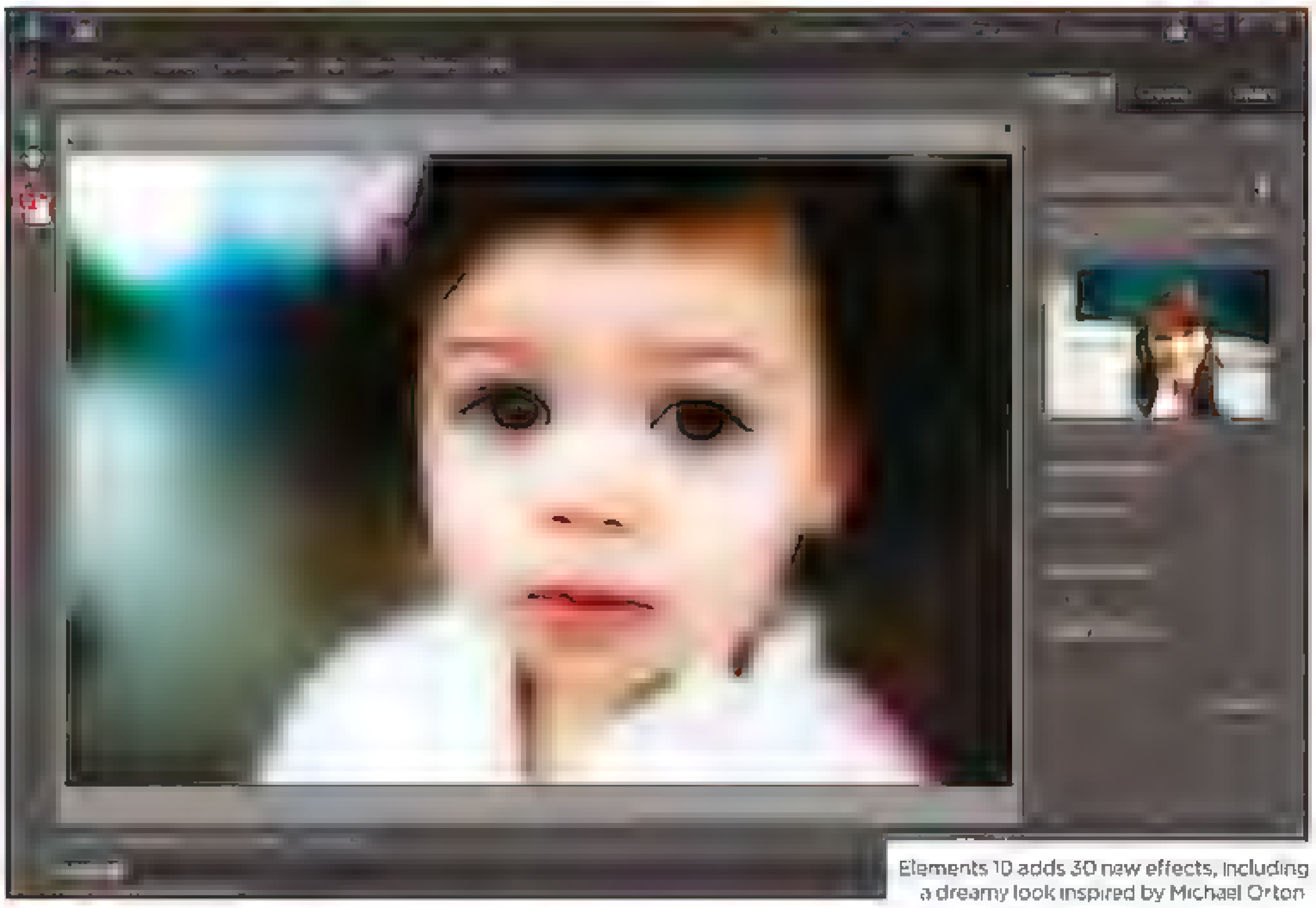
Corel hasn't set out to reinvent the wheel with MotionStudio 3D. With its familiar interface and extensive preset library it's arguably the Photoshop Elements of motion graphics, making its creative field easier to get into, at the cost of less control than you'd get elsewhere.

MotionStudio is able to output animations in anaglyphic 3D, designed for red-blue 3D specs.

Photoshop Elements 10

MINI-ME For about an eighth of the price, Elements gives you all the basics of Photoshop – but you may find it's not enough

Price [illegible] **Company** [illegible] **Web** [illegible] **Contact** [illegible]

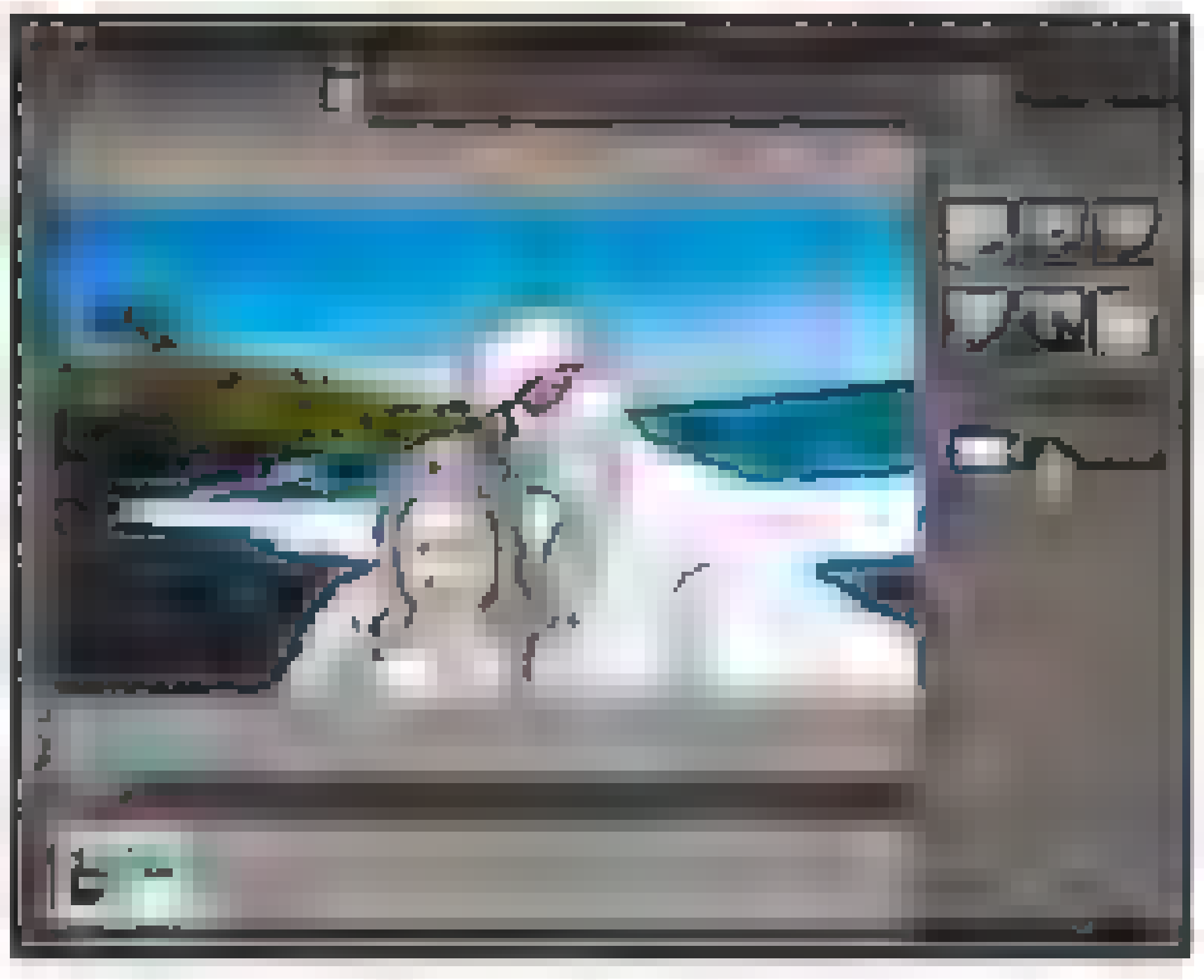


Elements 10 adds 30 new effects, including a dreamy look inspired by Michael Orton

You'd think from its marketing material that all Photoshop Elements did was help you fix and share photos. But although the keen amateur photographer is certainly its biggest customer, Elements also has a brush toolset for anyone who wants to paint on a blank digital canvas, making it a cut-price alternative to its pro-oriented sibling.

You won't find anything like the ready-made natural media paint set of ArtRage or Painter, but that's never been Photoshop's way. This is a tool for artists who love to tinker, tweaking settings until they have the personalised brush styles of their dreams. Although Elements enables you to load and save brush presets, you don't get anywhere near the quantity of custom editing options you'd enjoy in the full Photoshop. If your approach to digital painting is to establish just a few brushes and stick with those, that may not bother you too much. However, if you aim to exploit the potential of digital painting to its fullest, then your scope of experimentation in Elements is limited.

One useful new feature is the Smart Brush, which enables you to brush over an object to select it for editing. As you'd expect, it works best when there's a reasonable distinction between the object and the background, but it's still a good fallback when you realise you should have made better use of Element's extensive layer system.

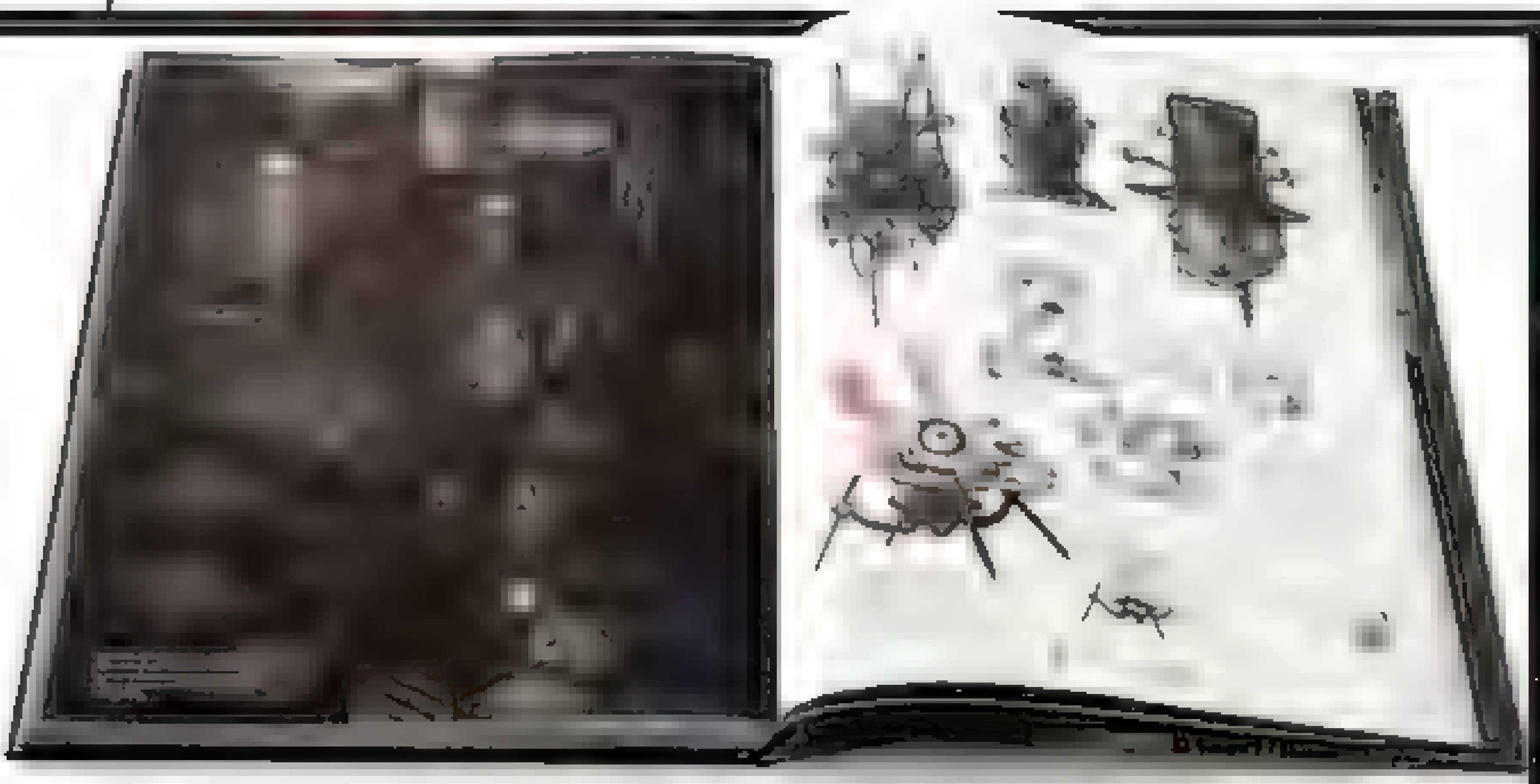


The Smart Brush enables you to select areas of an image to customise with your chosen effect

The Smart Brush is intended for use with the portfolio of ready-made effects that's one of Elements' biggest selling points, and which is expanded with 30 new variations in this release. This is ultimately a program for people who just want to grab something from a palette, apply it and be done. If you expect more, you might want to consider other options.

DETAILS

[illegible]



Harry Potter: Page to Screen

SPELLBINDING A behind-the-scenes look at the film-making journey shows the real magic of Harry Potter

Author Bob McCabe **Publisher** **Price**
Web titanbooks.com **Available**

The release of the final Harry Potter film this year brought the famous movie franchise to an emotional, action-packed end. To mark its cinematic conclusion, Titan Books published this 540-page compendium, which documents the film-making process that brought JK Rowling's best-selling books to the big screen.

The epic hardback was composed by renowned author and film critic Bob McCabe and what a job he's done. Carefully collecting all the right material, McCabe provides sufficient detail in the narrative without it feeling either lacking or overloaded. That said, some might find the word count heavy, but the writing is balanced perfectly by the careful selection of high-quality stills and concept art.

Both the author and production team have put a huge amount of thought into the layout and packaging of the product. Designed to look like a beautiful antique spell book, the hardback has been divided into two parts: the first chronicles all eight films while the second focuses on the art behind each.

The front half of the book is full of bright and vibrant images. It includes never-before-seen photographs and some absolutely stunning artwork from each of the films. Look out for the Battle of Hogwarts section and the precise, sublime concept art by Andrew Williamson.

The second part of the book is where the true magic lies however. The aptly named Art of Harry Potter section is indeed where the most inspiring concept artwork from the series can be found. "Bringing the incredibly popular Harry Potter series to the screen required a multitude of skills and a flawless attention to detail," says McCabe. The 300-plus pages of this tome certainly support his comment.

The latter half of the book is dedicated to the intricate designs of the film's characters, locations, creatures and artefacts. The concepts and captions do a great job of explaining just how a team of artists brought Rowling's imagination to life and how they reinvented creatures that are already part of a fantastical tradition.

Reading about these creative minds at work makes it clear how this story has become such a huge success. Anyone interested in the field of fantasy art should invest in this beautiful, rich source of inspiration.

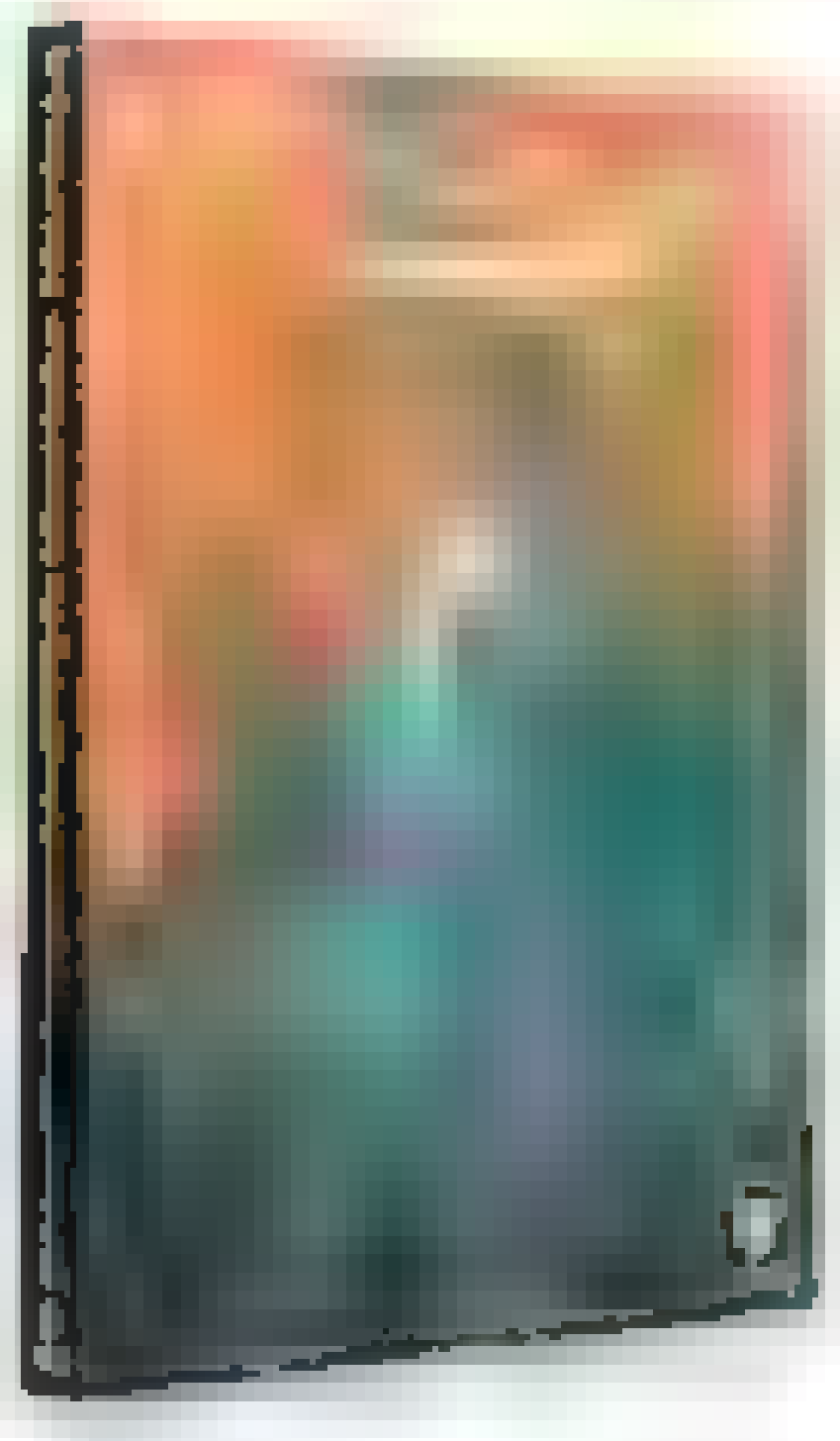
RATING ✍✍✍✍✍

Further reading…

A winning formula revisited and a classic story with a twist

Digital Painting Techniques Volume 3

Author 3D Total
Publisher 3D Total Publishing **Price** £30
Available Now
RATING ✍✍✍✍

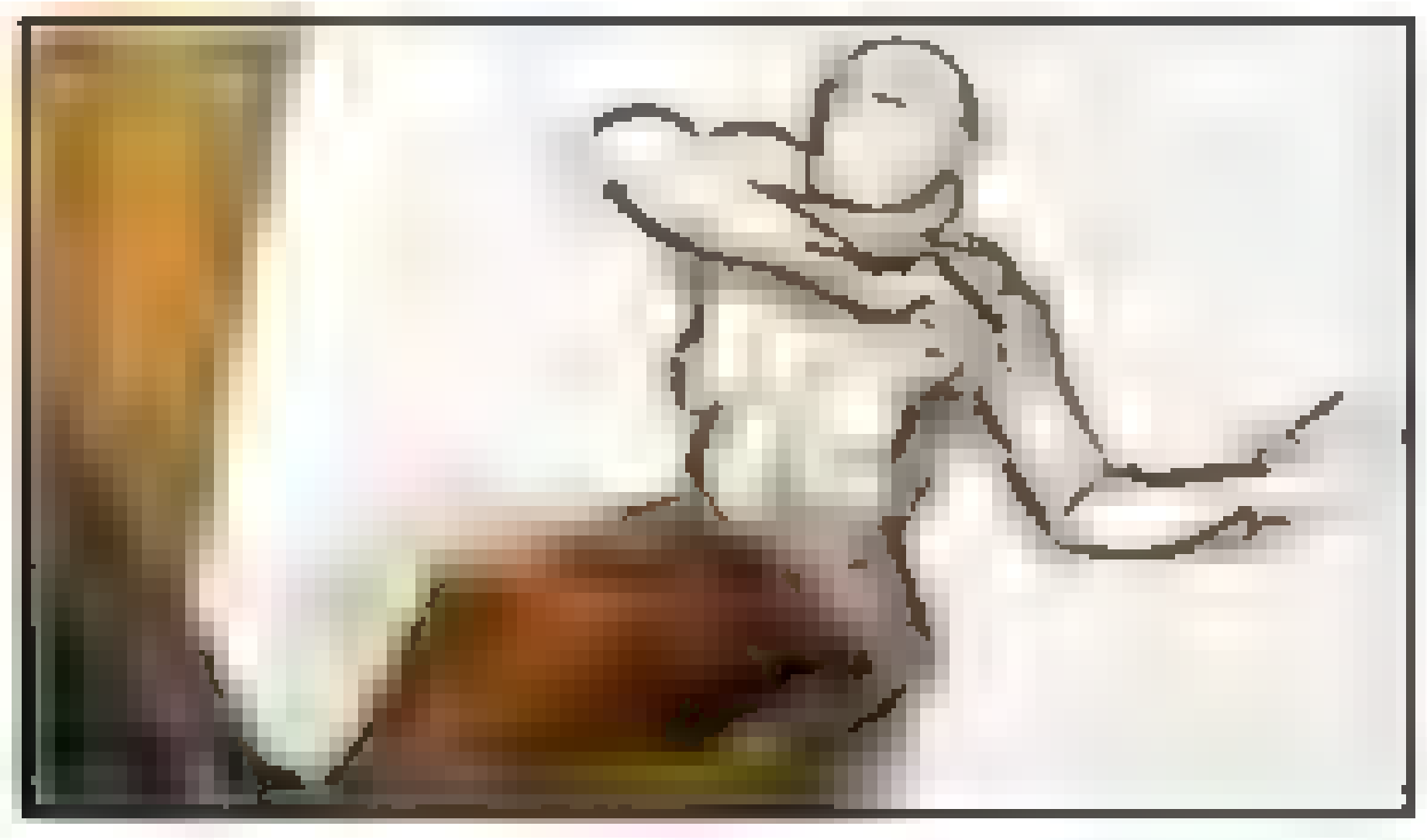


3D Total has stuck to the old saying 'if it ain't broke don't fix it' with the release of its latest book in their Digital Painting Techniques series. Following in its predecessors' footsteps, readers familiar with the publication shouldn't expect anything different in regard to the book's overall style and layout. For artists new to the series, the amount of information presented can be intimidating initially, but on closer inspection you'll see it's organised in such a way that makes the book clear and easy to follow. There are chapters on folklore, monsters, sci-fi cities, portraiture and more. Overall the artists featured are of a high calibre and there's plenty of quality artwork here to inspire both beginners and professionals alike.

The Art of Alice: Madness Returns

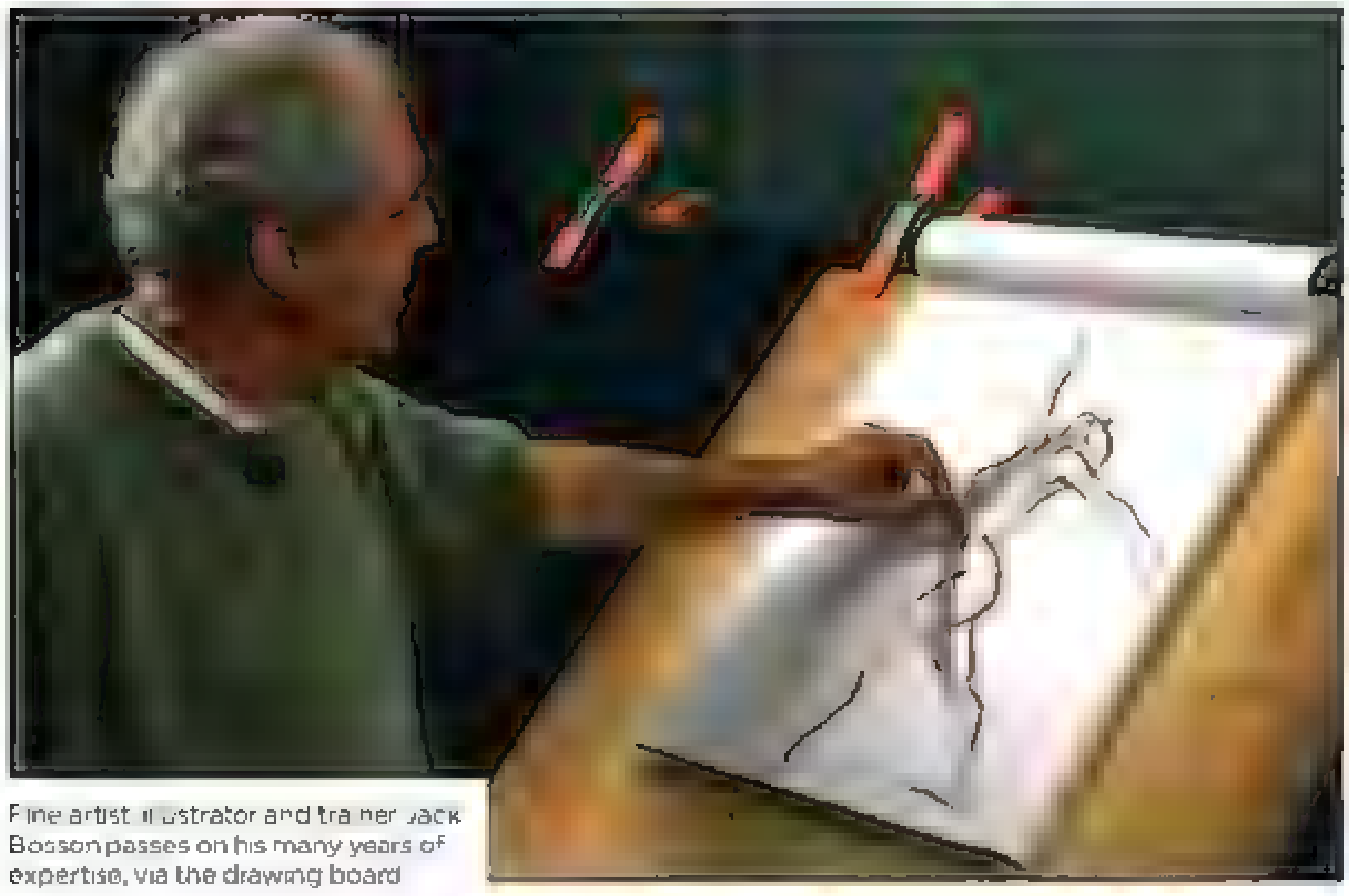
Author RJ Berg
Publisher Dark Horse **Price** £26
Available Now
RATING ✍✍✍✍✍

The Art of Alice: Madness Returns is a video game art book and a bloody good one at that. The luxury hardback has 184 thick glossy pages, which are filled with utterly brilliant concept art from this unique take on Lewis Carroll's classic story, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. The book is heavy on images and light on text, which is perfect in this case. Short introductions to each section and small image captions do just enough to set the scene, leaving the beautiful illustrations to do the talking. The opening narrative by American McGee adds a nice personal touch, providing a small insight into the man himself and the curious way this strange game came about (it involves a Crystal Method song).



Jack Bosson trained Disney's finest and his easy-going nature will inspire you

The video encourages you to take a fresh look at how you start your figure drawings



Fine artist, illustrator and trainer Jack Bosson passes on his many years of expertise, via the drawing board

DRAWING THE FIGURE

Drawing the Figure: Volume One

BODY LANGUAGE Fine artist and animator Jack Bosson explains what you should do in the first few minutes of a figure drawing

Publisher **Price** **Format** **Web**

Getting human figures right in your images is something that even artists with years of experience can still struggle with. Yet sometimes the answer lies in forgetting what you know and going back to the basics. Recorded as a single session in front of a sketch pad, Jack Bosson's video strips out the detail of figure drawing and invites you to take a fresh look at how you start your figures.

What's most important in the first few minutes of a drawing, he says, is to capture the essence of the figure: the way it's balanced in that moment and the innate rhythm of different parts of the body.

If you find yourself drawing figures that feel stiff and lifeless despite their anatomical accuracy, this approach can prove liberating. Get it right and each drawing you make can feel alive on the page.

Jack's taught this subject for ages to classes that include Disney's animators. That experience shows as he distils years of learning into an espresso shot of the most crucial ideas you need to understand, explaining each in simple, direct terms.

You'll see how to find the lines of balance in a pose, for example, as well as how to convey rhythm through the automatic compression and expansion of different body parts, an idea known as squash 'n' stretch in animation circles.

Jack barely touches on concepts such as anatomy and structure, reserving these for possible future video instalments. This session is about those critical first few minutes and how to spend them.

Experienced artists will benefit from Jack's encouragement to get back to basics, but if you're relatively new to figure drawing and have found yourself bogged down in measuring proportion and fretting over detail, these two hours could point your art in an exciting new direction.

DETAILS

Topics covered

[illegible]

Rating

JACK BOSSON

Jack has been a fine artist and freelance illustrator for over 35 years. He has taught drawing and painting at institutions including Cornell University, College of New Rochelle and University of Southern California. Jack did background painting briefly at Hanna Barbera before being hired in 1995 as a trainer in feature animation at Disney. He was hired to set up an Animation Department at Woodbury University, which he chaired for three years. He retired as Professor Emeritus.

www.jackbosson.com

Shia LaBeouf gives up the earnest shouting for a while and tries plain old running for your life

Transformers: Dark of the Moon

THE BIGGER THEY COME... Spare a thought for the artists whose work is just visible beneath Michael Bay's latest sensory onslaught

Distributor [illegible] Certificate [illegible] Price [illegible] Available [illegible]

Michael Bay, the director of Transformers: Dark of the Moon, doesn't care if you watch his movie. At least that's how it feels for most of its 157 minutes. The frantic pacing, rushed story, baffling tonal changes and constant carpet-bombing action doesn't leave a millimetre of room for the viewer to engage. TF3 is defined as much by its own high-fiving as its palpable glee that, should you think it nauseating, you 'just don't get it'. Surely, Bay couldn't give a sentient mechanised monkey's uncle what you think.

But then he must do – just look at those Transformers. Sure, the pace of the film is overwhelming, as if Usain Bolt edited it chewing on an adrenal gland. But slow it down and there's more functional detail in the Transformers, more film time taken to show them off. And with the talented artists at Massive Black employed to help create the look of the eponymous characters, it's no surprise.

If you're here to watch the bots, Massive Black, The Aaron Sims Company and many other concept artists have provided an all-you-can-eat buffet of eye candy. The Transformers are slick, often engaging well with the conveyor belt of action, like when Colossus demolishes a building with formidable ease. The character Laserbeak, which Massive Black's Wes Burt worked on, is a perfect example of design fitting character. But most bots are undermined by caricature accents – one from The Sopranos, another from Braveheart.

As for the story: there's an alien spacecraft on the moon that holds a secret, a big fight between the Autobots and Decepticons looks likely and no one takes Shia LaBeouf seriously, no matter how much he earnestly shouts. There's also some breathtakingly bad comic relief (gay toilet-sex anyone?).

If you liked the first two films, you'll enjoy the third. For everyone else, you might as well visit Massive Black's art blog for the best bits: **http://bit.ly/pJBuZH**

RATING

WES BURT

The Massive Black leading concept artist talks TF3

When did you work on Transformers 3?

Around the beginning of 2009 we worked on early TF3 materials directly with the Hasbro guys, while Michael Bay was wrapping up Transformers 2. After that, Bruno 'Nox' Gore and me joined the pre-production team for TF3.

What was your favourite character that you created?

I really enjoyed working on Laserbeak and some of the really early ideas for Q. We went all over the place in a bunch of different directions and refined it out based on what Michael wanted. It was also fun concepting sequences for the destruction of Chicago with the drill worm Decepticon vehicle and the massive Decepticon ships that would be hovering all over the city. Myself and Nox also got to play around with tons of different ideas for Optimus Prime's semi trailer and arsenal, too.

How did Massive Black get the involved in the first place

We've had a great working relationship with Hasbro for years and we worked with them on some early concepts for the first two movies. I think that's why they invited us to work on the third film in a greater capacity.

Do you mind working on a film that may get slated? Is the work all about the artwork and nothing more?

It's definitely a fun gig knowing your work will make it to the big screen. But it's also a co-operative process and we all wanted to make sure we were getting Michael and production designer Nigel Phelp's vision across and helping to tell the story. At times it was sort of like coming up with all kinds of cool toys to fill up a play box with, so that Michael could play with them in front of his cameras. It was a really cool and fun thing to do.

Wes is a leading concept artist at San Fransisco's Massive Black Studio. He worked on Laserbreak in TF3

www.wesley-burt.blogspot.com

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The Dark Knight swings into action in this epic sequel to Arkham Asylum.

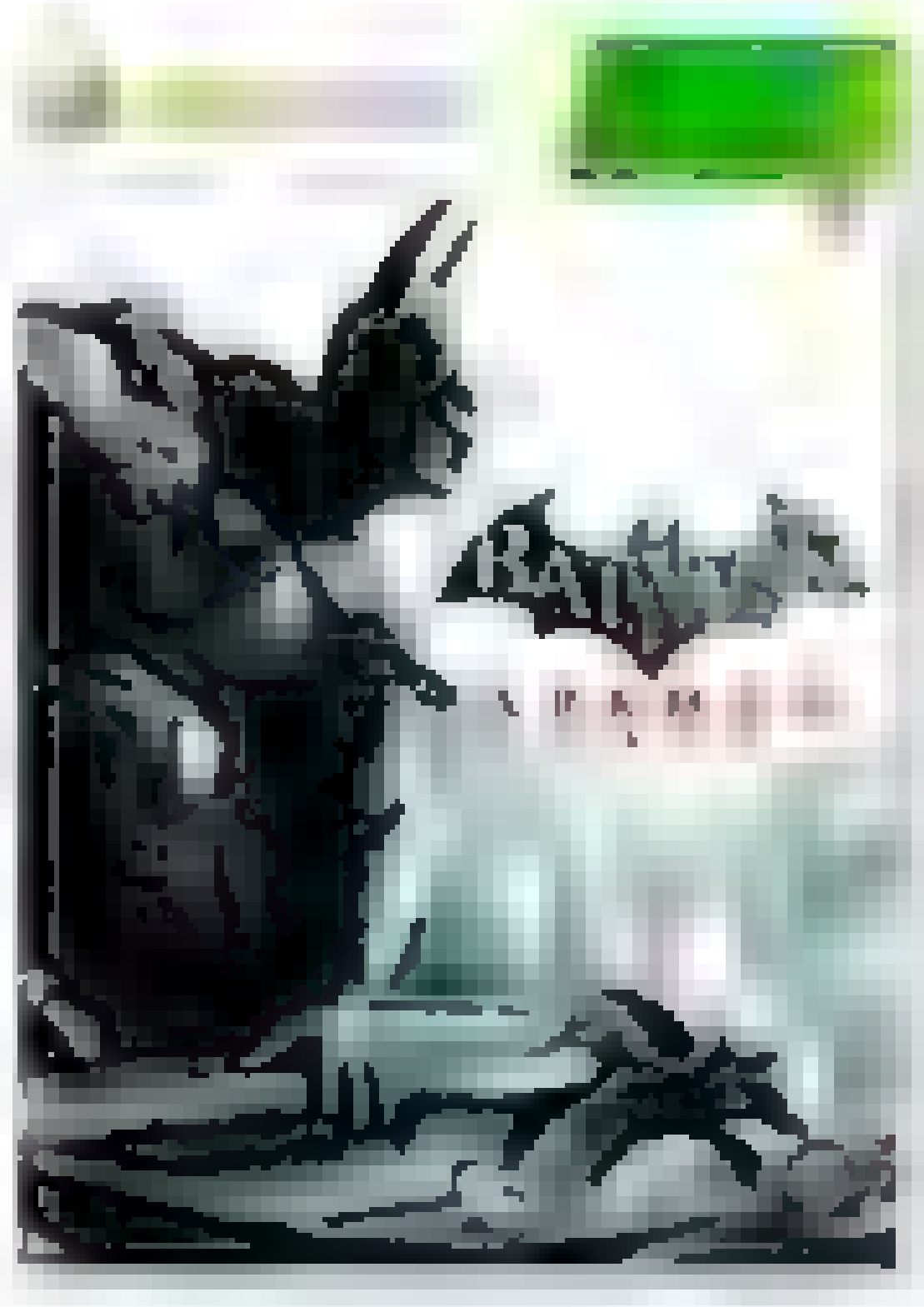
Batman: Arkham City

CITY OF VILLIANS Bold visuals push the Unreal 3 engine in a new direction – straight towards Bad Guy Central..

Format **Publisher**
Price **Available** Now **Web**

Long before the sheer size of Arkham City hits you, and hours before the scope of the hundreds of side missions and challenges become a major distraction, it's the incredible density of Arkham's new world that will blow you away. It's creative overload in every direction you look – one that's torn straight from DC's pages.

An entire section of Gotham's slums is walled off and filled with the most dangerous criminals from Blackgate Penitentiary and Arkham Asylum. Professor Hugo Strange has a plot unfolding behind the walls of this open air prison and Batman begins his investigation there, starting with The Joker and working his way through the best part of a century's worth of DC villains, who have been meticulously redesigned and modelled for their gaming debut.



With stealth, detective work and good old-fashioned clobbering, as well as plenty of secrets to discover, there's more to Arkham City than a rediscovered cast of crazies. Powered by Unreal 3, Rocksteady is owed a fruit basket from Epic for its work with the engine, pushing it further and making it look better and work harder than ever before.

This is a fully open world that's somehow rendered in an engine better suited to linear adventures. The vast neon cityscape is matched by incredible micro detail – newspapers, billboards, falling snow and leaves – in a space that dwarfs Arkham Asylum five times over. The demands of the art pipeline alone border on incomprehensible.

Combine this visual design with a ripping story by Paul Dini, flawless combat and stealth systems and an adventure that'll last close to 20 hours and Arkham City is an achievement in every sense.

RATING ✍✍✍✍✍

Also look at…

Two classics reborn in HD and fantasy gaming's most stubborn new entrant

Ico and Shadow of the Colossus HD Collection

Format PS3
Publisher Sony
Price £40
Available Now
RATING ✍✍✍✍

When video gamers need a game to cite as art, Ico and Shadow of the Colossus are two of the first ports of call. Ico changed everything and inspired a new generation of Prince of Persia, Tomb Raider and even Resident Evil games. Both games share a subtle and inventive look that, coupled with astute storytelling, force you to consider the implications of your actions.

Already beautiful on PS2 back in 2001 and 2005, Ico and Colossus are even better in 1080p, in 3D, and running at a rock solid 30 frames per second. That last one is important. Released late in the PS2's life, Colossus pushed the console beyond its limit and frequently ran at a low framerate. Here it's smooth and more playable than ever.

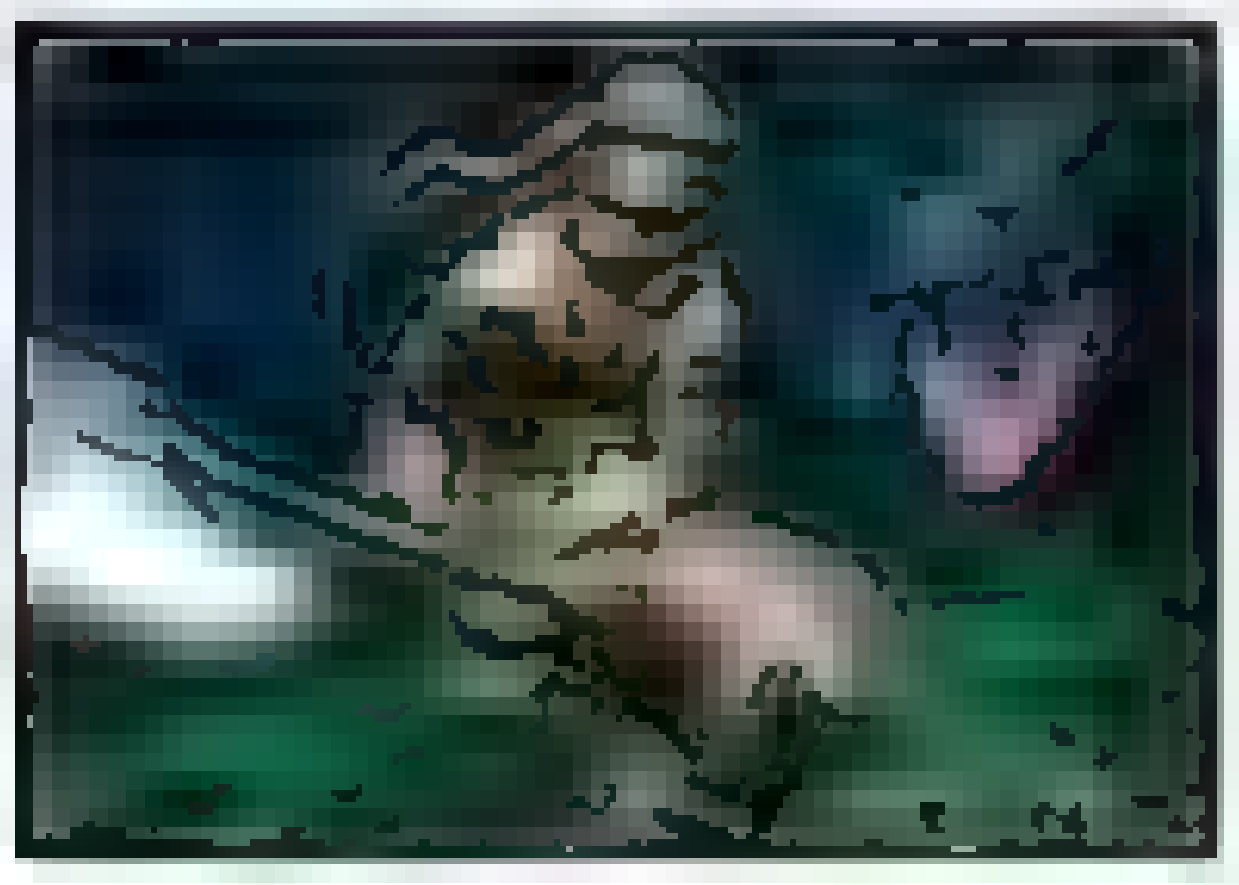
Both games were already essentials – the pinnacle of game, story and visual design – and now better and more accessible on the one disc.

Dark Souls

Format PS3, Xbox 360
Publisher Bandai Namco
Price £50
Available Now
RATING ✍✍✍✍✍

Dark Souls has been painted as some manner of bravado test for nerds, but instead its difficulty makes Dark Souls the most immersive RPG imaginable. In a world where everything can kill you, you have to pay attention.

Dark Souls' world is brutal and unforgiving in its mechanics and combat. It's a world where even the weakest enemy poses a very real threat, the environment is designed to be oppressive, it's permanently overcast with only a glimpse of sunlight through the clouds. In its bleakness it's a beautiful world – enemies are inhuman, spaces are inhospitable and the commitment to that one consistent style brings the world to life. This isn't level design, it's architecture and it feels as real as any fantasy world could ever be.



Dark Souls is a hard game only because it's so committed to the reality of its own world. It's a challenge but if it doesn't break you, you'll lose yourself in a world like no other.

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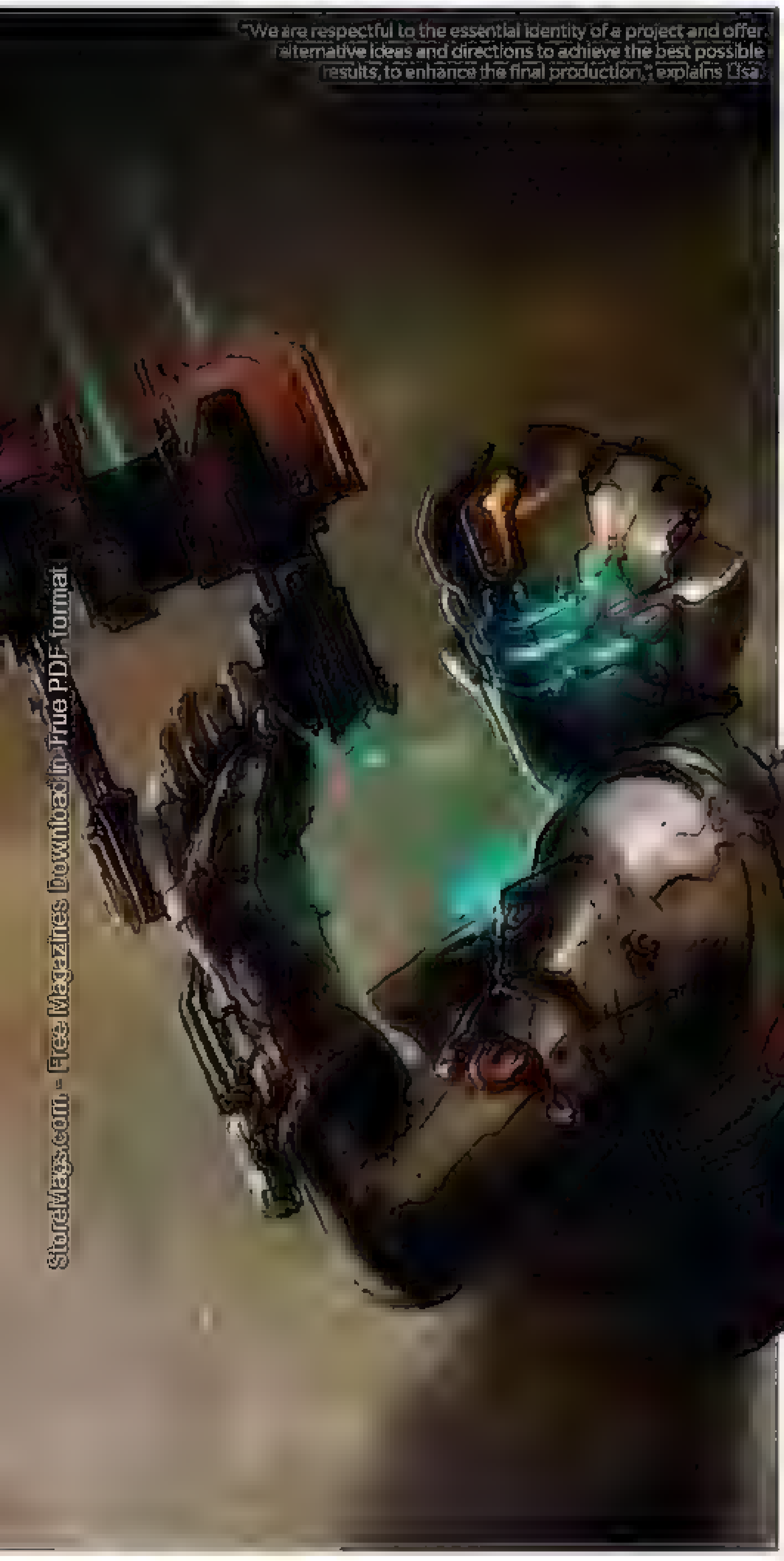
Opus Artz

[illegible] This small UK studio has been landing the big concept art contracts, thanks in no small part to the strong self-belief that runs through its talented team



"We are respectful to the essential identity of a project and offer alternative ideas and directions to achieve the best possible results, to enhance the final production," explains Lisa.

"The only goal we ever had was to provide an aspiring space that celebrates creativity and nurtures like-minded talent," says Opus Artz co-founder and managing director Lisa Tse. "As a result, we can spend every day doing something we love and excel at."

For Lisa's studio partner, co-founder and creative director Dr Chee Ming Wong, starting Opus Artz was about grabbing an opportunity and following a dream.

> We bring a variety of design and artistic skills to a project that goes beyond just making a nice picture

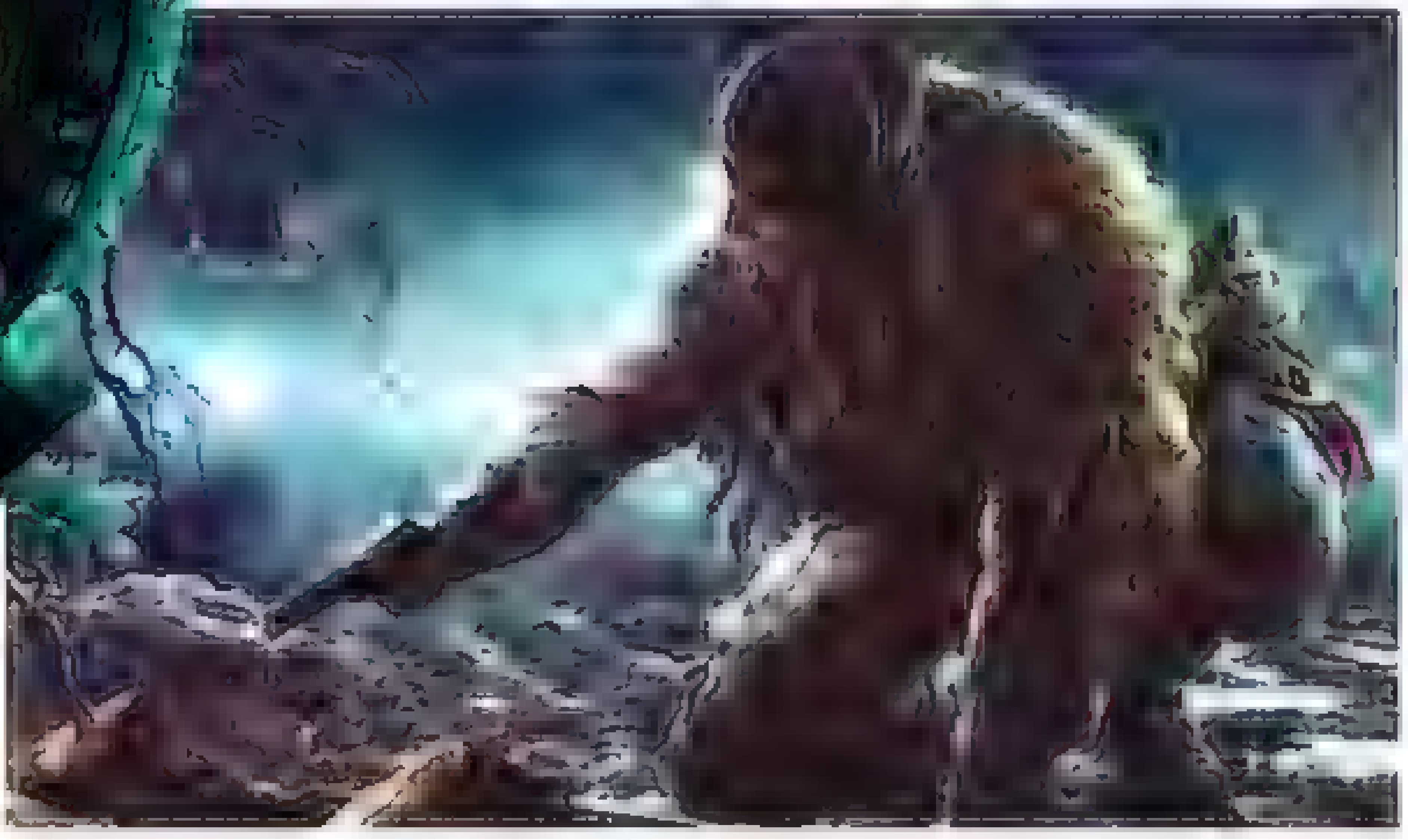
Turning to concept art as a career at a time when the industry was less formulated, Chee says: "It was a case of experimentation, working on freelance jobs, learning and sharing among like-minded artists, living and breathing art."

In 2007 Chee landed a project that was too big for one person. It was a freelance pitch creating art for BioShock 2, and so Opus Artz was founded. Since then the studio has grown, taken on new work for some of gaming's biggest titles, including InFamous 2, Sniper 2 and Dead Space 2.

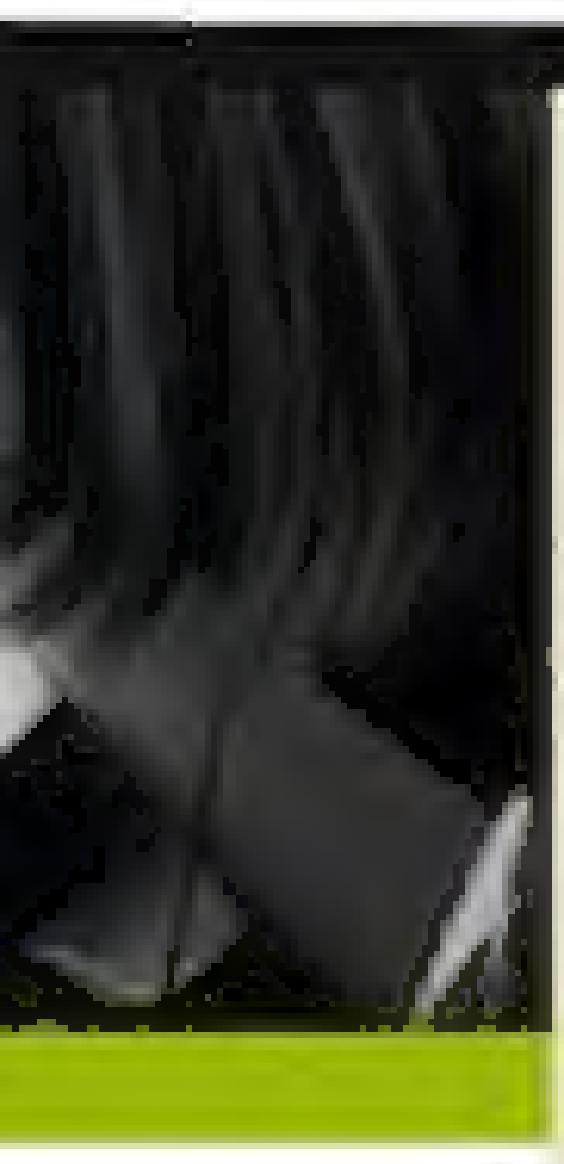
"One of our studio's core strengths is that we're an experienced production studio, bringing a variety of design and artistic skills to a project that goes beyond just making a nice picture," says Lisa, undaunted by the scale of the projects Opus Artz has become involved with.

For Chee, these projects are just the beginning of something bigger. "With the blurring of boundaries between games, animation, movies and entertainment, the gaming sector is the future test-bed of advanced interactive technologies in Futurism."

Launching Opus Artz has been about Chee following his dream and



Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2 is Opus Artz's latest project and involves creating mood pieces for the game



ARTIST INTERVIEW

BJORN HURRI

Lead artist Bjorn talks about working at Opus Artz

What is the biggest challenge of working at the company?
Challenges are not something negative. I see them as problems that need to be solved and enjoy doing that. Our biggest challenge is the demand to be flexible, as we cater to all sorts of clients and genres. We strive to deliver a unique product to each client, so it does put a weight on your shoulders. But it's so much fun!

How long have you been here?
I've been at Opus Artz for over a year now. Me and Chee have known each other for years. We always talked about working together and eventually the perfect time arose. We're both keen on pushing the theoretical and visual aspects in this field so now that we can work together, I'm very happy.

What skills do you need to work and succeed at Opus Artz?
The first thing we look for is great design, what the idea behind it is and whether it comes across. Second, we look at the technical qualities: can it be pushed further? Is this artist stuck in his/her style? Third, we look for production art capabilities: we do art for a lot of games so the artist needs to be able to break a concept down into schematics and colour keys, and supply reference to support the design. If the applicant fulfils all of that, we ask them to meet us for a meeting and we take it from there.

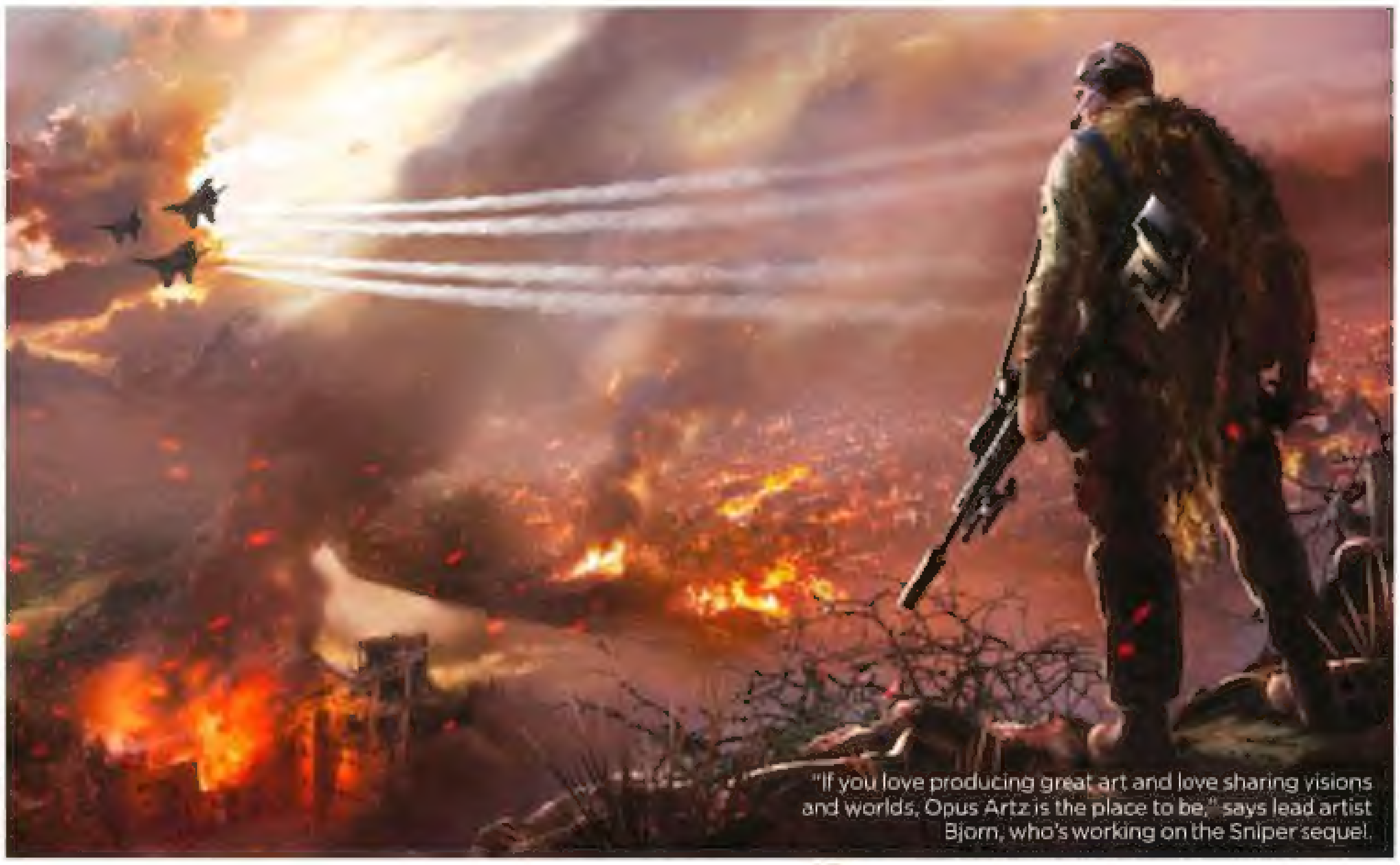
What project are you most proud of and why?
I'm proud and happy for any of the projects I have worked on. I always try my best and when someone else is able to dive into that world, be it through a game or a movie, I know that they'll enter into some of my imagination and thoughts.

Why would you recommend Opus Artz as a place to work?
We're a bunch of great guys – a bit nuts, but that's only a good thing!

Bjorn has many years' experience of the concept art industry, having previously worked at Creative Assembly.

www.bjornhurri.com

PROJECTS BioShock 2, Dead Space 2, InFamous 2, XCOM, Lara Croft and the Guardian of Light



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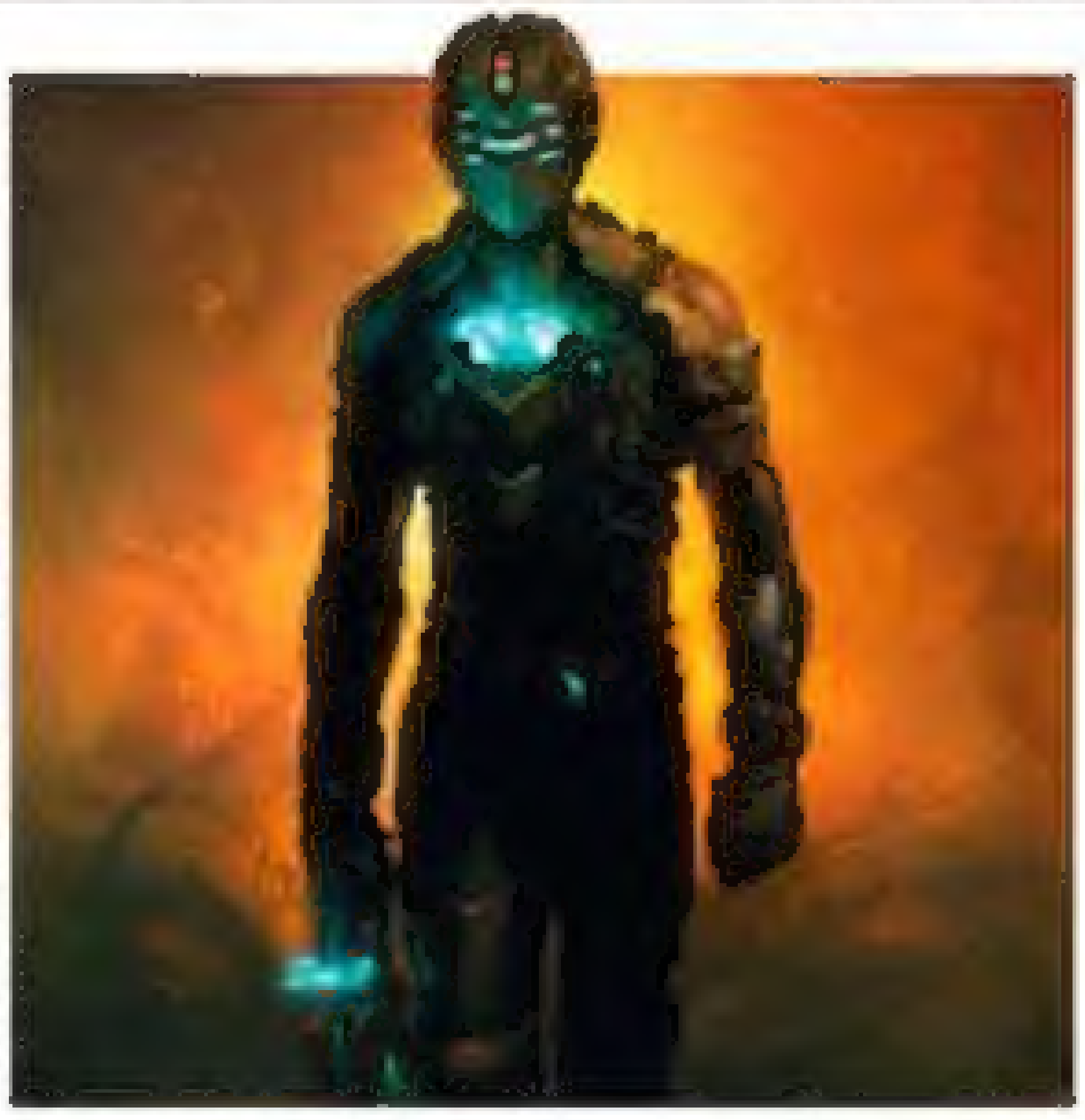
"If you love producing great art and love sharing visions and worlds, Opus Artz is the place to be," says lead artist Bjorn, who's working on the Sniper sequel.

making a leap of faith towards a rewarding goal. Indeed, the artist turned his back on a medical career to form Opus Artz. "Looking back, I would not have it any other way," he says. "Monetary wealth is a fringe benefit of success. It's important to believe in the things that you aspire to live for."

Recent times have tested that belief. The global economic downturn has affected many studios. Tax relief has helped many in Canada, Australia and America, says Chee, creating an uneven playing field for UK studios. But looking on the bright side, Chee points out that closures in the UK could result in an increase in smaller studios that "having survived the crucible of hardship can steer towards future excellence... and perhaps a return to the golden age of games development in the UK".

Even in such gloomy economic times Lisa is still confident about growth for Opus Artz. This means not giving in to complacency. "We believe there's always room for improvement," says Lisa, adding, "we are very proud of the work we have done to date, but as creatives we are continually growing. It's an exciting industry in a constant state of flux and we're enjoying the ride."

This also means getting the right people to work at Opus Artz. People who are adaptive and raw, who can grow as individuals and as artists. "We look for individuals who are passionate about their work and are committed to developing their skills," explains Lisa, before Chee adds that "our belief in growing and nurturing artists is our best achievement and legacy. Knowledge shared is truly a treasure that always grows."



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"Opus Artz fills the niche market of catering towards the 2D art pipeline with our strength in production art," explains Chee.

> **“As creatives we're continually growing. It's an exciting industry in a state of flux and we're enjoying the ride”**

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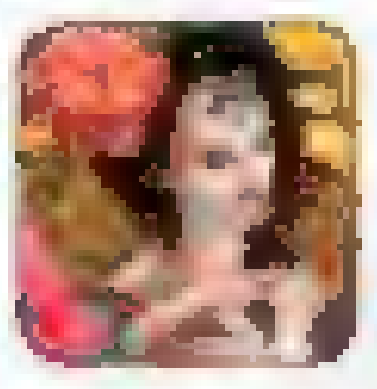

70 Paint a fantasy Asian figure
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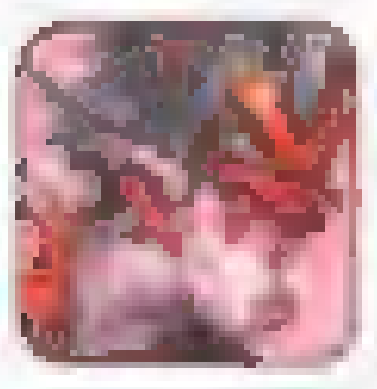

74 The Monkey King at moonlight
- WIP files • Final image

80 Compose your manga characters
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Experts answer your questions

Lava palava Manon explains how to paint your volcanic fantasy scenes.

Jean Genie Discover the best way to paint denim, with Jonathan Standing.

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